

THE  
GREAT DUTY  
OF  
CONFORMITY.  
Plainly Illustrated in the  
EXAMPLE

Of a Young Man, who was first drawn to the *Presbyterians*, and afterwards to the *Independent-Perfwasion*, but now from a deep sence of that his Sin, returned to the *Church of England*.

GIVING

A Particular Account of the Reasons whereby he was convinced of his Error in Separating; And a Modest Refutation of the Common Objections which are urged against CONFORMITY.

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*Written by himself for his own and the Churches Vindication.*

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*wherefore Ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake, Rom. 13. 5.*

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L O N D O N,

Printed for *Tho. Mercer*, and are to be Sold by *L. Meredith*, at the *Star* in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*, 1693.



THE  
GREAT DUTY  
OF

CONFIDENTIALITY  
Plainly illustrated in the  
EXAMPLE

Of a Young Man who was  
drawn to the Viceroy and  
went to the Viceroy's house  
now and then and was  
granted the Command of a regiment

OF VICE  
Particulars of the story  
in the progress of the  
story. And a final chapter  
on the subject of the  
CONFIDENTIALITY

THE  
Viceroy's house  
now and then  
granted the Command  
of a regiment

Particulars of the story  
in the progress of the  
story. And a final chapter  
on the subject of the  
CONFIDENTIALITY

To the Truly Honourable Sir  
Stephen Fox, Knight; one of  
the Lords Commissioners of  
His Majesties Treasury.

Honoured Sir,

**T**HE Contemplation of your Hero-  
ick Virtues, hath emboldned me to  
make this Dedication to your Honour, whose  
manifest Loyalty to the King, and Love  
to the Church, do abundantly express them-  
selves in your Noble and Virtuous Actions,  
which, like so many Heralds, Proclaim  
the same; Besides those particular Favours  
I my self have received at your bountiful  
Hands, which should I not remember, and ac-  
knowledge to your Worthy Praise; I should  
be of all men the most ungrateful. This  
poor Mite (unworthy of your Honour's view)  
I presume to lay at your Feet, that it may  
draw a Lustre from your Excellence to en-

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

lighten the minds of such who are filled with  
Prejudices against the Church.

The God of Heaven, who hath hitherto  
miraculously preserved (and I trust will  
evermore) our Most Gracious Sovereign,  
and this Church from the Plots of all their  
Enemies; Bless your Honour, your Ver-  
tuous Lady, and all your Family, not only  
with the Riches of this World, but of that  
which endures to all Eternity; which is the  
unceasing Prayer of

Your Honours most Humble  
and Devoted Servant,

John Jones.

An

An Epistle to my Brethren the  
Dissenters, especially those of  
Mr. Lobb's Congregation.  
Brethren.

**L**ET it not seem strange to any  
of you, that I have changed my  
Opinion, and am turned to the Com-  
munion of the Church of England, you  
may possibly conceive many things to  
be the occasion thereof, in your pri-  
vate Meditations; and may express  
your apprehensions to each other,  
when you meet together; and yet de-  
ceive your selves and wrong me also,  
as I understand you have done, but  
to satisfy you in the truth of the mat-  
ter, be pleased to read the following  
Discourse, and you will there find the  
true Reasons of it, even substantial  
Truths, tho' represented but in a  
plain down-right manner, and very



## An Epistle

homely dress, ( according to the meaness of the Author ) yet with great sincerity, and an ardent desire of your welfare. It is the fruit of those spare Hours that God hath afforded me in the Employment which I follow, and which I have writ to discharge my Conscience towards you all ; though it may be some may esteem it otherwise, yet God knows it is really so, and I pray God it may be for the good of many to make them look about them, and see how far they are short of a true Gospel Obedience : I am perswaded in my heart that many of you are so conscientious that you dare not wittingly commit the least evil for the greatest good in the World ; therefore have a care ; you know God requires Universal Obedience, and see that you render it unto him. Trust no Man, tho' he pretend to never so much Sincerity and Sanctity, unless he Preach this Doctrine,

## to the Dissenters.

*Etine, and put you in mind to be subject to Principalities, to obey Magistrates, &c. This is according to the pure Word of God; and the charge given to the Ministers of the Gospel. Be not deceived with fair Speeches and an outward shew of Holiness, for the Scripture saith such shall come into the World, and deceive many; the very Elect shall not wholly escape them; and how do you know but that you are these Persons spoken of? Remember you have warning to look to your selves; and see upon what ground you stand, if you take it not you may repent when it is too late: 'tis not good to be too confident. In the Book you will find a true Account of all Gods dealings with me (that are material) even from my Childhood, in order to his bringing me to the knowledge of himself: how I came to be of the Presbyterian Party; and how I came to leave them to be*  
of

## An Epistle

of the *Independent Judgment*, and also the Temptations I met withal from the *Papists* : But chiefly the Reasons why I have forsaken all to Conform to the *Church of England* ; there you have also my Apprehensions concerning all the chiefest Objections used against me in Conforming ; and pardon me if any thing seem harsh ; for I must speak my mind ; especially when I consider that the good of your Souls lies at Stake. I cannot but warn you to avoid the same danger ; that I (through Mercy) have been lately delivered from. If I am really in an Errour, I am sorry for it, and am easie to be convinc'd with good reason, and sound Arguments.

The Holy Scriptures is my Counsellour, which plainly convinces me that Conformity is a great Duty ; and fully to Illustrate the same, is my design in this Publication. The Lord grant it may prove convincing

to the Dissenters.

to you all, and engage you to the discharge of so great and necessary a Duty, which is the Prayer of

January  
the 11,  
1681.

Your Friend and Brother  
to serve you,

J. Jones.

To



to the Dismissals.  
to you all, and engage you to the dis-  
charge of to great and necessary  
Duty, which is the Prayer of  
TO THE  
READER:

Courteous Reader,

**H**ere is presented to thy View, an  
Example of one duely sensible of  
the Great Necessity of Con-  
forming to the Church of England.  
What he hath been, and what he is, the  
Book it self will inform thee. Read it ;  
not so much to Carp at, or to Joake  
upon any thing in it ; as to Profit thy  
self thereby. Examples are fine Lessons  
from whence may easily be learn'd Good  
or Evil, according to the nature of them ;  
If thou Judge this a good Example, and  
worthy

## To the Reader

worthy thy Imitation, as I trust thou wilt have cause, they follow it; and approve thy self to be a real Christian, by Fearing God, and by Honouring the King; He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do Justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. The Church of England doth press Holiness as much as any in the World, without which none can be Saved; therefore if thou love thy Soul, stick fast unto Her, least thou fall into Errour, and Schisme, and the Snare of the Devil. If thou art already drawn aside, by thy Education, or through Profit, or the alluring Enticements of any of thy Friends or Acquaintance; then speedily return; and let this Example quicken thy Diligence: In doing of which thou wilt bring much Glory to God, much Comfort and Benefit to thy self, and the Church of God.

And

## To the Reader.

*And to Conclude, (whether thou take  
this Advice or not) see thou be Charitable  
in all thy Censures; and so*

**Farewel.**

**T H E**

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The

# THE GREAT DUTY OF CONFORMITY.

*An Introduction, Containing the Reasons  
of undertaking this Vindication.*

**I**T pleased Almighty God in the beginning, to Create Mankind after his own Heavenly Image, and made him Lord of this lower Creation; giving him Dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowles of the Air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the face of the Earth; and in a capacity of enjoying sweet and intimate Communion with God: who made a Covenant with our first Parents, and us in him of advancing us to the greatest Happiness our Natures were capable of, upon condition of our Obedience, which we were then perfectly capable of rendring to his Divine Majesty: But by our Disobedience in the Fall of our first Parents, we became obnoxious to the greatest of Miseries; and had as little hopes of recovering Happiness, as the Angels that sinned  
B
before

before us ; who are reserved in chains of Darkness to the Judgment of the Great Day.

Our Misery being thus deplorable, God of his infinite Compassions, *unwilling that all should perish*, contrived a way for our recovery, and graciously condescended to make a promise of his Son, *to save all those that truly repent them of all their sins, that firmly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, with all their hearts ; and that sincerely labour to keep his commandments all the dayes of their lives.*

Yet considering that ( notwithstanding God calls upon miserable sinners with the greatest love and importunity, to perform these gracious and reasonable terms of their Salvation ) sinners will remain sinners still ; impenitent, unbelieving and disobedient to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And considering further, that those who are Regenerate, and have in some measure ( by the Grace of God given them ) performed these conditions of their Salvation : Yet by reason of some original Corruption, such as St. Paul expresses in Rom. 7. *When I would do good evil is present with me ; and the good which I would do that I cannot, but the evil I would not do, that do I.* I say, since something of Flesh remaineth in the best of Christians, it is no wonder, that as the effect thereof, do arise diversity of opinions amongst them, who notwithstanding agree about the means of Salvation.

Yet these diversity of Opinions about lesser matters in Religion, create most lamentable divisions, which through the craft and malice of the Devil, are fomented and increased in order to the destroying the whole of Religion.

And

And in a Nation where there are such diversity of opinions, (every party endeavouring to represent their own the best) it is a hard matter for a sincere Soul (that is made duely sensible of the necessity of minding Religion, and the saving of his soul) to make a safe choice.

For such is the malicious Policy of Satan, that when he cannot keep persons under the power and dominion of Sin; yet he will do them all the mischief he can; and if he cannot keep them from a serious, godly course of life, yet he will endeavour to draw them into Errour; and under a representation of the greatest purity and Gospel Order, doth ensnare them into disobedience, and disorder.

As for my part, after mature consideration, and earnest request to God, and a zealous profession of the opinions of Dissenters; I find it most agreeable both to Scripture, and Reason, to cleave unto the Church of England as it is by Law Establish'd.

My heart is grieved, and I am sorely afflicted, to see the generality of my dissenting Brethren, so much out of love with the good old way of the Church of England; that hath led millions to Heaven; that safe, that pure and most refined way, that hath not by refining eclipsed the lustre of Christianity.

A little dirt they see in the way makes them run into the Briars, where they are sorely entangled, and can't discern the footsteps by which the Flock doth go, both safe, and clean.

Such apprehensions they have, that all who go that way are certainly defiled; because they see some fall into the Mire, for want of care and dili-



gence to mind the way : Wherefore they are affrighted and fly, and thinking to keep their garments clean, they themselves become strangely polluted, and if any by discerning the footsteps of the Flock, endeavour to get out, they are immediately supposed to run through a puddle of iniquity.

Else, what is the reason that so many do suppose, because I have left the Dissenters, to go in the way of the Church of *England* ; that I am gone out of sight, into a great degree of darkness ; from the profession of Religion, toward Apostacy ; from the pure way of separation to the corruptions and pollutions of the Church of *England* ? This many have upbraided me with, not discerning their most gross mistake.

I wish all Dissenters may defile their garments no worse in the way they have chosen, than the serious Protestants in the *good way of the Church* ; but the contrary is most evident.

I am deeply sensible of the great scandal that is cast upon this Church, and the Members thereof, by Christians of other persuasions ; and am therefore compell'd to bring in my testimony to justify her, as well as vindicate my self : And I am induced to do it chiefly for these Reasons.

*First*, Because I would ( as God shall enable me ) represent the safety, as well as the excellency of the way of the Church of *England* ; and thereby take off the odium which my brethren have cast upon her.

*Secondly*, Because, as while I had an aversion to the Church, I took all opportunities of representing her ways unsafe, and unsound, and  
of

of drawing persons off from her communion : so now (by the grace of God) I will labour to undeceive those whom formerly I deceived ; and to encourage all those whom I find disposed to be religious to stick fast to that *form of sound words*, (which is taught, and practised in the Church of *England*;) *in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus* ; and that others may see the unreasonableness of such practices as well as I.

*Thirdly*, I am greatly induced to this work, because I am become a universal talk, among dissenting Brethren, and Sisters : As being a person who have made a long profession of the Gospel, according to the order and institution of Jesus Christ ; But am now by marrying a Wife of the Church of *England*, fall'n away to the dishonour of the Gospel, as well as my own destruction ; Hardening themselves in the way of Separation by my Example ; wherefore I think it highly expedient to convince them of their dangerous mistake in this particular. And that

*Fourthly*, A great sense of Duty obligeth me to make this solemn, but sincere Vindication of my self : because there are many who if they were rightly inform'd in their Judgments, would see the necessity of conforming as well as I ; and the greatness of the Duty.

For in the case of separation, *it is not enough to fear that the terms of Church-communion are sinful terms, but it must be made appear by the word of God wherein they are so* ; and where this can't sufficiently be made out, there is an absolute necessity of Conforming.

For it is an indispensable duty agreed upon by all Parties, that we ought to hold communion

with the establish'd Church of *England*, unless she did impose such terms of communion, that by Scripture can be proved sinful, which she doth not; as I will endeavour to make appear in the proof.

The mistake that the most of Dissenters lye under in this respect, enduceth me to discover to them the way by which God was pleased to enlighten me.

*Fifthly*, If I should neglect this work, many inconveniencies would follow thereupon. As,

1. Dissenters would triumph against the best constituted Church in the world (I mean the Church of *England*) and say, that persons of other persuasions never cleave to her communion, but that thereby they may have greater liberty to sin; and lead a more loose and careless life, with respect to Religion; and that Conscience, and a sense of duty can never do it.

2. If I did not undertake such a work as this; it might go for granted that I was become an Apostate, or one that had a temporary faith only; and in process of time fell from Christ and became fruitless for ever. And

3. Beholding my Fall, as such; will be more abundantly confirm'd in the ways of separation: and by all the Arguments they can find, will strengthen themselves in their manifest error and mistake.

*Most holy Lord God, Father of all Mercies, look down from heaven upon thy poor servant; and be graciously pleased to aid and assist me in this my undertaking, let it redound to thine honour and glory; and to the conviction of those that separate; give me clear appre-*

apprehensions of the greatness of that sin, and the opposite duty; that I may express with plainness my sense thereof, as I shall receive light from thy sacred word.

O let thy Spirit help all my infirmities: making me capable of serving thy most holy Majesty herein, and the Church which thou hast planted amongst us. O that thou wouldst bless her indeed, with a most painful, learned and pious Clergy, and a most holy people, blessed be thy name that we have any such especially so many. O increase her more abundantly, and add daylie to her such as shall be saved, and let thy poor worm grow up in her, till he become a perfect man in Christ, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all glory for ever, Amen.

B 4

A



*A Brief Account of several things further necessary to be known, in Order to a Right Understanding the following Discourse.*

**I** Greatly admire at the Free Grace of God towards me, whose love is marvelous and astonishing, such as cannot be fathomed, for being in the hands of God, *as the clay is in the hand of the potter*, he might have made me the vilest of all his Creatures even the most loathsome and venomous.

But such is his great favour, and kindness, that he hath made me a man, and not a Beast; a Christian, and not an Infidel; *the lines are fall'n to me in pleasant places.*

Gods superlative goodness hath gloriously appeared not only in that *I* was born in this *English Goshen*, where the true light of the Gospel (*which bringeth Salvation to all men*) hath marvellously shone forth, but also in that *I* was born of Christian Parents, in whom appeared the power of Godliness; who took care to bring me up in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

These are such amazing instances of Gods peculiar love and good-will; that *I* cannot but be filled with admiration under the lively apprehensions of them.

*O praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, Bless his Holy Name.*

I was born, in the year of our Lord God, one thousand six hundred fifty seven.

My Father was a true Loyal Britain of *Merioneth-shire*, and a Minister of Jesus Christ.

When the King came in, he was sent for out of *Shropshire*, (where he had lived a considerable time) into *Monmouthshire*, to perform his office as an *Ambassador of Jesus Christ*: But things not answering his expectation there, after one year, went into *Glamorganshire*, where he enjoyed a Benefice of threescore pounds a year, three years together; and then ended a Holy Life, *Dying in the Lord*.

I was but nine years old when he dyed; but the influence of a good Education, which I received originally from him, and afterwards from my Mother, restrained me from any gross acts of impiety; till God by his Spirit did more effectually convince me of *Sin and righteousness*.

Had my Father lived, I had been made a Scholar; but his early departure, before I came to maturity, did greatly obstruct the same.

My Mother, keeping me in awe, and instructing me in my Duty, towards God, and towards Man; was a great means God made use of, to engage me to lead a sober life and conversation: in which sense I may say, *I have feared God from my Youth*.

When I was near sixteen years of age, my Mother sent me to *London* to be an Apprentice; God stirring up the heart of a Worthy Knight and his Lady to assist her therein.

During the time of my Apprentiship, God was pleased to open my heart as he did the heart of *Lydia*, and revealed unto me the things that belong



throw and destruction of the Church, and Prelates thereof, as well as Popery.

Which prayers are certainly an *abomination in the sight of God*; and of which sort there are not a few.

It was long before God was pleased to give me a sight of my error and mistake: But God (who worketh all things together for good, to those that love him, and unfeignedly seek unto him; to be guided into the way of all truth) did in his own due time, hear my prayers, and open my eyes, that I might see my folly; and turn my feet into the way of his testimonies.

It was by little and little that God did discover to me the excellency of the constitution, of the Church of England; which induced me now, and then, to hear some of her teachers, and to converse with prudent men that were of her persuasion.

At which time I was observed not to be so constant, and diligent in attending Mr. Dobb's Ministry as before; which gave occasion of suspicion, to my brethren, to think, I had lost my first love, and zeal for Religion; And that the cares of this world, or some other temptation, had put a stop to my hopeful procedure in the service of God.

Having the principles of separation distill'd into my mind together with Regeneration, it became the more difficult to purge them out.

The first thing that took effect, was the consideration of the *Oath* which I took at receiving my Freedom. I considered it was an *Oath* which no Dissenters (excepting *Quakers*) refuse to take; which made me not to scruple it.

But



But afterwards hearing Mr. Lobb Preach against the breach of Promissory Oaths, shewing the hainousness of the Sin; made me reflect upon what I had done; and examine how far I had performed the conditions it required.

And having examined the matter, I feared greatly, that it did prohibit the frequenting all religious assemblies that met together contrary to the will and pleasure of our *Sovereign Lord the King*; whose peace I had there promised to keep in my own person; and to let, or hinder to my power, whatever tends to the disturbance thereof: But these things I could not reconcile in my mind to my practice in dissenting.

2. After this I did earnestly implore the God of Heaven, to direct me into the way of Truth: But did keep all these things in my own breast, from any of my Brethren.

Which had I not done, I believe my convictions, had been nipt in the bud when they were tender and weak: but it pleased God that so I did from time to time, till they came to some maturity.

I still kept correspondence with my Brethren; but frequently took opportunities of going to Church.

And upon a certain day it pleased God I had a great desire to hear the Bishop of London Preach, and went to *Shoreditch Church* with a friend for that purpose; where the good Bishop (after Sermon was ended) did confirm many.

And I beholding him, being possess'd with a strong belief, that his prayers, with the whole Congregations; were mighty prevalent with God, for obtaining the desired blessing: and find-

finding it an Ordinance of Jesus Christ, which ought to follow Baptisme (according to that in *Heb. 6. 2.*) I became exceeding desirous of it; expressing the same to the Bishop, who condescended thereunto.

This Confirmation had a great influence upon me, as well to quicken my diligence in the service of God, as to encrease my love to the Church of *England*.

3. Some considerable time after this, I came to be acquainted with a virtuous maid (who was a Ministers Daughter in the Country) and a good Christian, as well as strict Church-woman; towards whom I found my affections very flexible.

And though I was not perfectly of the Judgment of the Church of *England*, yet I did believe that a small difference in opinion, was not sufficient to separate those that were united in affection; especially considering, there is scarce two men on earth, of one mind in all things.

This I concealed likewise from Mr. *Lobb*, and the rest of my brethren, excepting two persons: (who did approve of my procedure therein and kept my counsel) because I concluded all the rest would perfectly dislike it.

A little before I was married, I went to tell Mr. *Lobb* what I had done, but it was after all was concluded between us. He being not at home I told his Wife what I came about, who seemed very much displeased at it, and thought she would be a means to draw me away to the Church of *England*; to whom I reply'd, I thought not so, being perswaded that it must be stronger Reasons than usually women are furnished withall, that

that must have so powerful an effect:

But I did not intimate in the least that I had any greater kindness for the Church of *England* than I had formerly; neither did I speak against it; for at that time I had (in some things) an aversion to hold communion with her.

After I was married I quickly went down into the Countrey to my Wives Friends; whose Father being a very learned, pious, and discreet Clergy-man; did give me very satisfying answers to most of my objections.

Yet when I came to *London* to converse among my brethren; I knew not how, to express my resolution of departing from them; nor of defending my self from them the censures I incur'd: but my seldom coming among them gave them a strong suspicion of what I was about.

At length I took up a resolution of going to Mr. *Lobb* to give him the reasons of my absenting which I did; but doing it very imperfectly, being over-power'd with an excellent Scholar and cunning disputant: I thought it requisite afterward to give him my reasons in writing; in which paper were some things misapplied, as though I did accuse them all, of being *Rebels* and *Traitors*, and I know not what, which news was presently reported all over the City, among the dissenters: insomuch that I heard of it by my acquaintance up and down, who had heard of my infamy.

That I was drawn away by my Wife, from Mr. *Lobb* and his congregation, and was fallen from God, and the institutions of Jesus Christ to be of the Church of *England*.

Many

Many sharp debates I had with Mr. Lobb and several of the Brethren; which I omit in this place.

But that which above all things did Anchor my Faith, in the way of this Church, was that excellent book, of the learned and pious Dean of St. Pauls, entituled *The Unreasonableness of Separation*: The Arguments therein are so convincing and strong, there is no resisting them.

And in this Faith, I hope to continue all the rest of my dayes, being deeply convinc'd that in what Nation, or Country soever I live, I am bound to observe the Laws of that Nation, even in matters of Religion, *when they are not repugnant to the Laws of God*, which are contained in the Books of the *Old and New Testament*.

Now there being nothing in the Church of *England* contrary to the Scriptures: there is nothing to be scrupled by any sincere, and loyal Soul: which I doubt not, but by manifest proof will be clearly evinced.

*O Lord how great is thy goodness, and thy love, past finding out, thy mercy of a truth endureth for ever, and thy faithfulness throughout all generations.*

*Thou hast promised and performed unto thy servant that which in righteousness proceeded out of thy lips; thy name be exalted above all blessing and praise for ever.*

*Thou hast led me into the way of truth, thou hast kept my feet from falling, and establish't me upon a rock.*

*Thou hast made me to rejoyce in the light of thy countenance, and favour which is better than life.*

*And*



And since for thy sake I am fallen under the displeasure of my brethren, my friends and acquaintance; yet I can rejoice at those, that have found great spoil.

O let me never forfeit thy favour, but alwaies keep a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards man.

O thou who hast opened mine eyes, bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

A

*A more particular Account of my adhering  
to the Presbyterian way and my pro-  
ficiency therein.*

**G**OD, (who in infinite Wisdom doth order and dispose of all things) did according to his own good pleasure, bring me to the knowledge of the truth, which is by Jesus Christ. The methods of Gods Providence in this respect are very remarkable.

First, That God should deny Conversion to me in the Church of *England*. And

Secondly, That he should direct me to the *Presbyterian* Party, and there make wicked men the chiefest instruments in that glorious work.

First, That God should not make the Ministry of the Church of *England*, effectual, for the convincing of me, and some others; is not because God hath withdrawn his Spirit, and his Blessing, as some think, (whose Faith in that is but Fancy.) For (blessed be God) his Spirit appears most powerfully in turning thousands from sin, to Jesus Christ, as might be made appear abundantly; but that in this place it would be too long a digression.

Secondly, That it should please God to let me fall among the *Presbyterians*, and make me sensible of my lost and undone condition by reason of the fall, while without an Interest in Jesus Christ; even amongst them; is not because God hath a more peculiar kindness for them than others: but it is

First, To discover, that the Spirit of God is no way confined, or limited, to one opinion, or Sect among Christians, but doth universally discover it self to be active every where in all places, in the Church of *England* as much as in any place besides.

For Gods proceeding in this nature, discovers his universal kindness to all men, and his unwillingness that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth.

Secondly, God doth thereby manifest his wonderful love to the Elect.

There is no Religion in the World, but (it is to be hoped) that God hath some elect therein: Therefore as God by his Providence doth disperse his Elect, some among one Sect, and some among another; he doth ordinarily make some amongst whom they are the instruments of begetting them to a lively hope, and Faith in Christ.

Yet sometimes he doth by extraordinary Acts of Providence; direct unto some special means, for the conversion of others.

Whence it appears, that all the Elect of God, are brought to Faith and Repentance, which are the essential parts of Conversion, and without which there can be no Salvation.

And in a Christian land where they all hold the same common rules for Salvation; though they differ in their Judgments, in lesser matters; yet the Spirit of God, makes no difference at all, in bringing home the number of the Elect, to himself, by Regeneration; not confining it self, to the *Presbyterians*, more than the Church of *England*, or to one particular form, more than another.

Which

Which teacheth us the great necessity of Union in such a Nation; and the great sin of breaking that Bond, where the Spirit of God hath not broken it.

And as these are some of the reasons why God doth by his Spirit, convince Sinners of the evil of their wayes where he will: so there are other reasons by which it will appear that he can do it when he will, and by whom he will.

First, God can convert sinners when he will; in Childhood, or in Youth; in Manhood, or in old Age, some God calls *early at the first hour*, some at the *third*, others not till the *ninth*, or *eleventh*; some like *Jeremiah*, or *John Baptist*, are *sanctified from the Womb*; others come not to Repentance, till sickness or old Age seizeth upon them, or (which is but rare) in the last hour of their life, as the Thief upon the Cross. But

As late Repentance, and Faith, is seldom true; yet true Repentance and Faith is never too late; and we use to say, better late than never.

God is confined to no time; he can save a sinner from the brink of the grave, and crown him with Eternal Glory: though it is not Gods usual course, and method, so to do; and it is dreadful presumption, in any to depend upon it, a sin that seldom escapes unpunished in another world, a plain transgression of the positive Will of God. For,

Remember [now] thy Creator in the dayes of thy Youth; and seek [first] the Kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof: is a duty, before any other, about worldly affaires.

Secondly, God can make use of whom he will as instruments; to carry on this new birth upon



the soul : yea and what he pleaseth may greatly conduce thereunto.

For, as God is a Spirit, omniscient, and omnipotent ; nothing can confine him in any of his Operations, especially, in working Grace in the hearts of sinners ; he makes use of good and bad, as pleaseth him, to call home the number of the Elect.

Some there are whose business it is to labour the Salvation of others ; and yet they themselves become *cast-aways* : and notwithstanding they are made instruments of saving hundreds, yet if God change not their own hearts, they will fall short of Salvation themselves.

Hence it is that many men of wicked lives and conversations meet with success on this account, some of the Church of *England*, and others among Dissenters : and I am apt to think that their Success depends upon the number of the Elect that God hath in those respective places, where they have their Station.

However, this is certain from Scripture, and experience, that many *preach in the name of Christ here, that shall be separate from the presence of Christ hereafter*, and to all Eternity.

Of this sort ( I fear ) were those, whom it pleased God to make instruments of good to me.

I speak not this to reproach either their Persons, or their Profession, but only to take off the reproach which Dissenters have cast upon the Church of *England*, by representing all their own guides, as most holy and sincere ; and those of the Church as prophane and wicked wretches ; from whom the Spirits influence is departed.

And

And those that are pious and sincere, (excepting a very few comparatively) are accounted Factors for the Pope.

By which means an antipathy is created in the generality of Dissenters against this Church; Thereby obstructing the great design of the Gospel; which is Love and Union.

And as long as there are those, who cease not to administer the cause; it cannot be expected but that the ill effects will follow.

*The God of heaven convince every one of them, of their evil herein, as well as me.*

I confess, I had mighty prejudices against the Church, upon this Account; which I received by my frequent converses with those, who had very little kindness for her.

When I was an Apprentice, I lived not far from *Newmarket*, where *Mr. Farrendine* Preached, and there being a Kinswoman of my Masters, who delighted much to hear him, she perswaded my Master, to let me go with her; (who constantly went to Church before) and coming amongst them being possess'd with a strong opinion, (from the relation I had) that I should hear as it were an Oracle from Heaven speak unto me.

I did compose my self with more than ordinary seriousness to attend upon him; and it pleas'd God that *Mr. Dod* preached that time, to whom I gave most diligent attention, supposing him to be the other Person.

Yet God was so gracious to me at that time, as to fasten strong convictions upon me of the necessity of leading, a more strict, and godly course of Life, than before.

This man I greatly praised, when I came home; but was told the other was still a more excellent man; which made me have a longing desire, to hear him.

The next Lords day I went again, with as great seriousness as before; and was as much taken with Mr. *Farrendine's* Preaching as the others and by a continual attendance upon him; I was much enlightened in the things that did belong to my eternal peace; and a great change did pass upon my Will and Affections.

At that time I was mighty inquisitive to know the true and safe way to *Sion*, and to that end I was diligent in hearing Sermons, in reading good Books, and conversing with Christians, about such things as might profit my Soul: and in no wise could rest satisfied till I had some comfortable grounds to hope that God had begun a good work in me. And

Being a constant Hearer of Mr. *Farrendine's*, for the space of two years, I became acquainted with divers of his Congregation that brought me into a personal acquaintance with himself; who at my request admitted me to be a member of his Congregation, in which Communion, I continued the space of one whole year.

This Mr. *Farrendine*, some years before, had brought a great scandal upon himself; which did very much impair his Credit among the wiser sort of men; but for the space of three years after, he behaved himself so well, that to all outward appearance, he was become a new Creature; a most sincere, mortified, and holy Man; and had in a great measure recovered his Credit

Credit and Reputation; having gathered together a fine congregation, which brought him a considerable income.

But discovering his Hypocrisie again, by falling into his old accustomed practises; did not only disgrace himself for ever; but rent his Congregation asunder: who separated themselves, some to one place and some to another; though others resolved to keep in a body together, till God provided for them a Guide.

From all which will plainly appear,

First, That when the Providence of God doth cast his people, where there is a wicked Minister, he will make that Minister instrumental of saving their Souls, by convincing them of the evil of their wayes, and the necessity of leading a holy Life, and Conversation; though after all he himself should become a Cast-away.

Therefore in those places in the Country where the Providence of God doth confine a people to such a one, they ought ordinarily to attend on him; and to submit to the Will of God, seeking to him alone, for a Blessing upon his Word, though delivered to them by a Covetous Balaam, a treacherous Judas, a drunken Phineas, &c.: looking upon it, as it is indeed, *the word of God*, and not the word of man.

Secondly, Hereby it appears that God is no respecter of Persons, nor Parties among men; for where-ever God by his Providence doth disperse his Elect, he will procure sufficient means for their Conversion.

If they are cast among Heathens and Infidels there his hand will find them; if they are cast amongst



mongst *Papists* or *Quakers*; he will find out a way to save them; as well as in any other Sect.

There is no doubt, but that in many Forreign parts, (where those kind of Persons inhabit by themselves) God hath some Elect among them, which he will doubtless bring to Salvation by Jesus Christ, according to his infinite Wisdom and Power.

Yet notwithstanding in a Christian Land, where the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is profess'd, according to the pure Word of God, and by the Laws thereof establisht; it becomes the Duty of every one, not to prefer his own private Fancies and Opinions before the publick Peace and Union of a Nation.

Thirdly, From this method of Gods Providence, we have no reason to wonder, that God makes use of such to convert Souls, whose practices are highly displeasing to him.

I am perswaded that the practices of the Dissenters, in promoting Variance, Strife, Malice, Dissensions, &c. by separating from, and breaking the Peace of a true Church of Jesus Christ, is as great a sin as any in the world.

Yet notwithstanding God is pleas'd oftentimes to make use of them to bring in divers of the Elect, as well as others.

But I would not be thought to abuse dissenters, in saying that they promote Division and Confusion in this Gospel Land; for is it not evident that we are ready to devour one another by it? Experience doth sadly convince us of our Misery in this respect; and why is it? because

cause Government will not truckle to the private opinions of these men.

But it is to be feared, that God will by some dreadful Judgment put an end to that controversy, and teach us to agree better; and so let us *Brothers*, who ought not to fall out by the way about the manner of walking, since it is every ones design to arrive at the same place: Heaven or the Jerusalem above, is the City we all aim at.

And all Dissenters that are not very rigid, do acknowledge that the Parochial Churches of England, are in a safe way thither; notwithstanding they are so contentious about inconsiderable trifles; but if any man seems contentious, we have no such custom, nor the true Churches of God.

*O Lord do thou convince us of our folly and madness, in these our unchristian Divisions, and animosities; and let them not carry us into any further Confusions.*

*Do thou put a check to those busie Agents who are the disturbers of our English Israel, whoever they be.*

*We are through the wickedness of some (well known to thee) brought into great perplexity; but do thou O Lord stretch forth thy hand to deliver us.*

*Preserve our King from the violence of any adversary, and let no weapon formed against him prosper.*

*Let his Life be long; and his Reign happy and prosperous over us.*

*O that peace might be restored to this Nation, and that our hearts might be united in love together, that all might see a necessity of conforming to those good,*

good, and wholesome laws; which are our interest, as well as our Duty, to observe and keep.  
 And grant to thy servant a greater knowledge of thy heavenly Will, and a fixed resolution to obey the same, with a courage to appear for thee, and the Church which thou hast planted, and established amongst us, while I have a being in this world.  
 Great has been thy goodness to me, O Lord; for which thy holy Name be blessed and praised for ever and ever; Amen.

Con-

Concerning my leaving the Presbyterian way, and my Apprehensions of Religion then.

**H**AVING run over the various methods of Gods dealings with me thus far; I am now to proceed and shew, how it pleased God, to make a breach in Mr. Farrendines Congregation, and the reasons why I forsook him thereupon; as to the first I have given a hint before, and will by no means defile my Pen by relating the particular crimes he was guilty of, which were many and great; and had a kind of influence upon me to separate from him, after I was convict of the certainty thereof; but it was a long while before I could believe the truth of what was alledge'd against him; I had such an extraordinary love for him.

Whoever I heard pray and preach (that were accounted eminent) yet I thought Mr. Farrendine excelled them all; I could venture to put my Life into his hand, I had such a confidence in him; yea, and had it been possible, *I could have pluckt out mine eyes,* (as St. Paul speaks of the Galatians,) *for the love I did bear him.*

But when his hypocrisy was made manifest, my love was turn'd in hatred thereunto; though not utterly extinguish't as to his person;

Upon whose account I have ever cause to bless God, who rais'd him up to be an instrument of good to my Soul.

Yet



Yet this had a great influence upon me ; to desire to be separated from him, and such who still did cleave unto him, lest thereby I should be partaker of their sin of encouraging him in his wicked practices, yet this of it self had never prevailed, had it not been.

2. That the practices of others of his Congregation became effectual for that purpose.

When I saw that his Congregation was divided, and every one did as his own inclination did lead him unto ; then I broke off with the rest, and having no kindness at all for the Church of *England*, I thought it most requisite to continue with my Brethren, who lately came away from Mr. *Farrendine*, and kept together, meeting sometimes at one House, and sometimes at another, to consult together for the settling of themselves.

In this condition we remained a considerable time, some being desirous to joyn themselves with another *Presbyterian* Church ; others thinking it more convenient to continue together, and address themselves to Dr. *Annesly*, and the rest of the *Synod* to procure them a Pastor, which they all concluded upon :

But most of them being desirous of an *Independent* Government, some applying themselves to Dr. *Annesly*, and others to Dr. *Owen*, and his Party ; for advice, and assistance, were directed to one, or another to preach for them, till they could have one to their mind, that could serve them.

But in the choice of a Pastor they could not all agree, for where the generality were agreed fully

ly in their choice, particular persons were dissatisfied.

The first Person they pitcht upon was Mr. *James*, and some of them not liking him, broke off, and separated: But Mr. *James* had something better in his eye, and at last refused to serve them.

After him they had Mr. *Ness*, who was very willing to serve them; but the generality did not like him, which caused another breach amongst them: for when he went away, many separated to follow him.

This made them fear they should be broken all to pieces, before they could all agree in their choice.

To prevent which, those that were left by the advice of Dr. *Owen*, Mr. *Rider*, and others, were perswaded to enter into Covenant together, to give up themselves to God, and to one another by the will of God; and so become a Church Organical.

To which end, they drew up a form of resignation; and did all subscribe thereto, excepting two or three which could not be present, (there being a day set apart for that purpose) of which number excepted I was one; opportunity not admitting my being present with them.

After this they were diligent to keep together, and had divers to preach for them, and at length accepted of Mr. *Lobb*, whom they all did approve of, resolving that he should be their Pastor.

Between the time they left Mr. *Farrendine*, and Mr. *Lobbs* coming amongst them, (which was considerable) I was under no special Obligation of continuing with them, but yet I did and gave many signal proofs of my love and affection to them all.

My

My apprehensions of the great and weighty matters of Religion, upon which Salvation doth depend, I will discover in its proper place.

But very false apprehensions I had in the other part of Religion, and contrary to those I have received since.

Then I only looked upon the examples of others, whom I judged good Christians; and thought if I did as they, I could not do amiss.

Sometimes I would think within my self, that my Father was a good man, and yet he did Conform to the Church of England, and was a Minister of the same, and that I did not follow his steps, which did engage me now and then to examine the matter, in order to my own satisfaction.

But conversing altogether with those of the separation, I did easily embrace their Notions, and follow their Examples; thinking them to be the only people of God in the Land, and had rather be of any Religion than the Church of England, excepting a Papist or Quaker.

And when I considered Rom. 13. and other places that required Obedience to the higher Powers, and that did insist on the Office of Bishops, &c. I concluded that the word of God must be regarded; and though I could not very well reconcile the practices of Dissenters to it; yet I had a brave Romish implicit Faith, which clearly carried me over all difficulties.

Believing that such Holy Men did not err therein, but that their practice was very good, although I understood not where it was grounded.

And

And finally I concluded that all they said of the Church of *England* was certainly true, (with respect to her Ministers, and Service; that she did add to, and diminish from the Word of God; and was a going full drive towards *Rome*;) because I believed they were men that would not lye, and had so much Charity for her, as to represent her far better than really she was.

But now I see plainly that every little mote is to them a Mountain of Separation, and while they are earnest to pull the Mote out of the Eye of the Church of *England*, they see not the great Beam which is in their own Eye.

At that time I was altogether for the *Independant* way of Church-Government, being brought in love therewith by the example of my Brethren, who said there was better Orders than among the Presbyterians.

There they should have more liberty to improve their Gifts, and to shew their Parts, although there were greater strictness in admitting Members into their Congregations, and greater severity when in.

Their high commendations of that way, together with reading of a Book, publisht by Mr. Foord, intituled *The Gospel Church*; did bring me in love therewith, which engaged me at Mr. Lobbs settlement, to become a Member of his Congregation.

And this truly was the result, of those kind of apprehensions, which I had about Religion; as to the dogmatical part thereof.

O Eternal and most Glorious Majesty, thou that hast preserved me from my Mother's Womb (through  
the



the various changes of this uncertain sinful life) to this very moment, give me Grace that I may faithfully serve thee all the rest of my days. Thou hast discovered to me a great deal of folly I have been guilty of in the admiration of mens persons, and preferring their ways and opinions, before that safe way which thou hast by thy Gracious Providence established in this Land.

Thou art he O Lord to whom I have chiefly addressed my self in all the troubles I have met withal on this account; who hast guided me into the way of peace, and truth by thy Spirit, according to thy promise, and hast heard the voice of my supplication.

Be thou my strong Tower and Defence, and let me not become the reproach of any.

Let me submit to thy Heavenly will in all thy Gracious Dispensations towards me, and never murmur at the severest of thy Providences.

O Lord, my Trust is in thee, let me never be ashamed, but let such be ashamed, who break thy commandments.

My Soul, Bless thou the Lord, and let not any of his benefits be forgotten.

To thee O Holy Father, by thy Spirit, through thy dear and well beloved Son, be all Honour, Praise, and Glory, World without end, Amen.

Of

Of my Adhearing to the Independant  
Way, and Advancement therein.

NOTwithstanding all these Gracious Discoveries, of Gods Infinite goodness to me, I was still infected with this Poyson of Separation, hating the Laws and Government of Christ established in this Realm; being partial in my Obedience, and swel'd with strange Notions, and high conceits of serving him, in a purer way than he by his Providence (in Infinite Wisdom) hath provided for us, and confined us unto.

Yet nevertheless, God suffered me still to persist, and imbrace the *Independant Way*, before he did convince me of my sin, and whither it did lead unto.

For Mr. *Lobb* being approved of, and after a considerable time of Tryal, received into the Church, and called to the Office of a Pastor, by the Members of it; he being willing to undertake the said Office of a Pastor; a day was set apart for his consecration, at a private house, where divers Ministers were appointed to meet, (as well Presbyterian, as Congregational men) who after the *Independant* way, ordained him, without laying on of hands; and the Church in token of their free choice of him to be their Pastor, held up their hands.

After this, many Members were admitted, to enlarge the Congregation among whom I was very forward, and being examined about my fitness

ness for Church-fellowship, and breaking of bread, I was admitted into the Congregation, promising to take reproofs patiently, to avoid every known sin, and to perform every known duty, and to walk as the Gospel of Christ requires in all things.

This I particularly mention that it may appear what kind of Covenant I made, and wherein I have broken the same by separating from them.

My separating from them, being but an effectual putting that Covenant in Execution, by avoiding that gross sin of Disobedience to Magistrates, and therein obeying the Gospel of Christ, which by continuing with them, I never could accomplish, but should have advanced higher and higher, to the greater disturbance of my peace in the latter end.

In this way I was so far advanced, that I thought those arguments which I had learned, to defend the principles of Separation, were such as no power of the Church of *England* was able to shake, because I did not understand the efficacy that was in them, neither would I suffer it to enter into my mind; till it pleased God in a wonderful manner to convince me of the necessity of impartial judging; according as things were truly represented on both sides from *Scripture* and *reason*.

Yet although I my self am fully convinc'd of evils; I judge not those who are not, but humbly beg of God, they may; that it may redound to his Glory, and their comfort for ever.

Great is the malice of Satan in riveting into the minds of people such strong and invincible prejudices, that can hardly ever be fetcht out; such as is generally in the hearts of Dissenters, against the Church of *England*, as well as Popery.

It

It is a Disease in Christians which must be purged out, if ever they would be well, and healthy; which will infect, if not timely prevented (as it hath done many) with the greatest enthusiasm.

I confess there are some of the same Spirit in the Church of *England* too censorious, and inveterate against Dissenters; but amongst them, it is an Epidemical Disease, which is the great obstruction of peace and union amongst us; and are to be markt, and avoided as such who cause division, and are Enemies to the Interest of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Authors of unspeakable mischief.

And they are such as represent the Church of *England* to be *Popish* and *Antichristian*, or advancing towards *Popery*; or such that represent her to be so far corrupt and degenerate, as to lose the blessed influence of the Holy Ghost, in Convincing and Converting Sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ.

These being most apparent falsehoods, and undeserved scandals, thrown upon the Church by these Men, they in so doing become the faulty Dividers.

And while there is such enmity between these, and some of the Church of *England*, who do as it were bite, and devour one another, (as the *Apostle* saith) It is no wonder if in the end, we are consumed one of another.

These are the works of the flesh, which God condemns and threatens with dreadful punishments, and are contrary to true Religion and Christianity.

Before it pleased God to convince me that the way I walked in was displeasing to him, I conceived



ceived that all compliances with the Church of *England*, were absolutely evil, and except the Church would agree with them in all things they required, It was their Duty to persist in Non-Conformity, of obeying God rather than Man.

I am perswaded this is the sence of all truly conscientious persons, that do separate, of which sort I believe are many affixed Members of particular Congregations, who have strong apprehensions of the sinfulness of some things that are imposed upon them by the Church of *England*, that compels them to withdraw from her Communion, and are nevertheless sincere Christians, though deceived in many things.

And we ought to be very earnest, in our dayly prayers to God, that he would make them sensible of their great sin, and bring them into the way of true obedience.

For these persons acting really and conscientiously, according to their sence of things, are not to be blam'd so much as those who make deceitful representations of those weighty Affairs unto them, fastening into their minds such a firm belief of the truth of what they say, as is most difficult to be removed, though grounded but on a weak and sandy foundation, as plainly appears to all those that are unbiassed.

This I speak (by the way) in favour of those that are sincere and upright from my own experience, wishing with all my soul, that they would be so kind to themselves, as to be a little jealous over their own hearts, [lest] they should be deceived in the matter of separation.

Frequent examination of this matter is very requisite, taking in the full strength and force as well

well of their Adversaries Arguments as their own, without the least partiality.

As I was advanced in the *Independant* way to a great contempt of the *Church of England*, believing her to be much inclin'd to Popery, so I was highly incens'd against *Popery* it self, and furnished my self with Arguments sufficient to defend my self against that Party, among many of whom I had my Conversation when I was out of my time, of which I will presently give a more particular account.

O! The depths, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out! Who can utter the mighty acts of God, or who can shew forth all his praise.

His goodness endureth for ever, and his truth reacheth unto the Clouds; It is God that hath appeared in mercy to his Servant, for which my soul shall praise him for ever, and ever.

O Lord, I pray thee for the prosperity and welfare of Zion, and the peace of Jerusalem, that thou wouldst create Peace within her Walls, and Righteousness within her Pallaces; O Bless thy Church Universal, and particularly, this thou hast planted in these Nations, the Head and Members of it, and give us all Charity, the bond of peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

*Of the Temptations I met with from the  
Papists, and the way of my escape.*

**O**F all the Sects amongst Christians, I always have had the greatest aversion for *Papists* and *Quakers*; yet, notwithstanding, I have so much Charity for them both, as to believe (that such who sincerely practise what they know, and desire to know what they should practice, altho' they are kept in ignorance of what they ought to know, by those who have the greatest influence over them) that they may be saved.

Their principles are equally alike destructive to the Fundamental Doctrines of the true Christian Religion; which to defend is the great Duty as well as Interest of every Believer, so far as God enables him.

It pleased the alwise God after I had been made acquainted with the manifold Errors of the Church of Rome, that I should be brought under some tryals from that party.

After I was out of my time I took a Room in *Drury-Lane*, in which House were Lodgers that were *Papists*, who after I had been there a few days, took acquaintance with me, and in process of time discovered their design, by attempting to evince the excellency of their way above all others; which they fell wonderfully short in: And being but talking Women that could give no solid reason for what they did believe, and affirm with abundance of confidence; I gave but little regard unto them. But

But they became unwearied in their attempts, being perswaded that they should greatly merit at the hands of God, if they could but convert me to their Faith ; But they found I was so far rooted and grounded in the Protestant Religion, that it was too difficult a work for them to accomplish ; And finding I required such reasons, that they were not able to give, they concluded that if I were but acquainted with some of their Priests, I should from them receive reasons sufficient to convince me, that out of the Church of *Rome* was no salvation.

To promote this work they became mighty industrious, and by a while accomplished the same, though the effect did no way answer their expectation in it.

These Persons frequently did resort to *Newgate*, where were several Popish Priests, amongst the rest, one Mr. *Micarty* an *Irish* Gentleman, and an intimate Friend to those Gentlewomen, being Father Confessor to one, or both of them.

Upon a day one of these Gentlewomen told me there was a Sermon to be preached at *Newgate* to the Prisoners the day following, and askt me if I would go along with her to hear it, which I condescended to, and on the morrow made me ready to go with her ; where we were between Nine and Ten a Clock in the morning, but instead of going to the Chappel to hear a Sermon, we went to the Priests Chamber, where we continued till six a Clock at Night, and where I was entertain'd with all the respect and civility imaginable, and our debates about Religion were with abundance of calmness and moderation.



The first point of Controversie that did naturally present it self, was merit, where he asserted, 'That the good works of Christians did merit at the hands of God; or that Christians performing those good works which God hath commanded, God is obliged to make good the promises he has made to such, and such performances, and are as much their due, as Workmans Wages. Illustrating the same by many similitudes of that Nature.

To which I reply'd, it was my judgment, that the fall of our first Parents did convey such impotence to us that did utterly disable us from performing any good work so exactly as God requires at our hands, therefore we did not merit.

Our understandings (by the fall) are so darkened, that we do not know what is the good will and pleasure of God: Our wills are so vitiated and corrupted, that we are averse to whatever is good, but exceeding prone to evil; the understanding being blinded (by the fall,) represents good evil, and evil good; sin to be most pleasant and delightful, and goodness most burthensome and grievous; which makes the will vehemently pursue the evil, and reject the good.

Hence all our Affections are so disordered; as our Love, Joy, Desire, Hatred, Delight, &c. which are in Unregenerate Men placed upon wrong Objects, till God by Grace doth work a change upon them, therefore it will follow that *Unregenerate Men cannot merit, nor do any thing well-pleasing in the sight of God.*

And as for the Regenerate (or such as are turned from the evil of their ways) there is a great difference; for although they do not merit, yet *their good works are acceptable in the sight of God,*

*God, because of the merits of our Lord Christ Jesus, which is imputed to them, and made theirs by faith.*

Yet there is so much imperfection and sin attends the best of their performances, that renders them lyable to Gods infinite displeasure, and having done all, *they are still but unprofitable Servants*, and are infinitely owing to the free Grace of God in Jesus Christ, for the acceptance of any of their services, or enjoyment of any mercy which they receive.

Therefore they cannot merit, because they cannot exactly perform the condition of the promise, which had it been possible for them to have done, there had been no need of Christ to come in the flesh, to dye, and to suffer for the sins of the World.

But he reply'd, ' That God gave to every man ' a Talent of Grace to improve for their Souls ' Salvation, and that it was in mans power to ' improve it to a good or bad use, as he pleased ; ' for which reason every man was the sole Author ' of his own destruction.

I answered him, I did believe, *That mans destruction was of himself, and that God would have all to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth,* and had provided sufficient means for their Salvation by Jesus Christ: Yet, notwithstanding, (by the fall) our wills being so inclin'd to evil, and averse to whatever is Holy: *We will not come unto Christ, though thereby we might have Life.*

Yea, though God doth wonderfully manifest his unfeigned desire that all Sinners should be saved, not only by inviting them freely, but by expostulating the case with them, to turn unto him, saying, *Turn ye, Turn ye, for why will ye die ; As I live,*  
*saith*

*said the Lord, I take no pleasure in the Death of him that dyes, but had rather he would return and live.*

Yet such is the obstinacy of Mankind, that (although God hath sent Christ to save them, and gather them together, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings) they will not come unto him.

But God being more merciful than Man deserves, resolves to pluck some as brands out of the fire, and to make them Heirs of Salvation through Christ, to whom he hath promised a seed; and, *that he shall see the travel of his Soul, and be satisfied*: and though the Flesh, the World, and the Devil do by their cursed temptations oppose them in coming to Christ for Salvation, yet he shall divide the spoil with the strong, and by his Almighty Arm shall save all that the Father giveth unto him.

And as for the rest who despise the long-suffering, and forbearing mercy of God, will become Vessels of wrath fited for destruction.

Whence it follows that Men by Nature will not come to Christ; nay, Sin and Sathan binds them so fast, that they cannot come to Christ.

Not that the Devil keeps them against their wills, but by his temptations makes them willing to serve him, and obstinate against all the pretious invitations, and offers of Christ in the Gospel; so that there must pass a change upon the Understanding, the Will, and the Affections, before a person can be saved, which will appear in a through Reformation of the whole man, by leading a Holy Life and Conversation.

But he made reply again, that all Mankind did receive true Grace from God, which was  
 ' suf-

‘sufficient for their Salvation, and that if they  
‘did not improve it, ’twas their own fault.

To which I demanded of him if a man might  
fall away from true Grace?

He answered, ‘Yes, for many did fall away  
‘into Apostacy.

Then said I, Such were never endued with true  
Grace, (which makes them the Children of God,  
for if they had, they would have been kept by the  
*mighty power of God through Faith unto Salvation.*

He further replied, ‘That there were several  
‘degrees of Grace, some of which, Men might fall  
‘from, and perish for ever; but to some God did  
‘vouchsafe special Grace, by which they should  
‘persevere unto the end, from which it was im-  
‘possible for them ever to fall away totally and  
‘finally.

At which I smiled, saying, Sir, I am very glad  
to hear you acknowledge so much, that is it I  
have been pleading for, which now you have  
granted.

I acknowledge, that God doth vouchsafe to all  
men common and restraining Grace, which  
doth not only prevent them in their wicked de-  
signs, but doth also strive with them, to leave  
their evil ways, and turn to God, which they  
refusing, become the Authors of their own Eter-  
nal ruine.

We discoursed also concerning Transubstanti-  
ation, with abundance of calmness, notwith-  
standing the oppositeness of our Opinions; he af-  
firming the *real presence in the Elements consecrated*,  
and I denying the same.

His Arguments for proof were vain and ab-  
surd, both against sense and reason; He said,

‘They



‘ They believed it was so, because Christ had  
 ‘ said it, and Christ did not come to deceive, but  
 ‘ when he said, This is my Body, ( *this Bread* )  
 ‘ they believed he spoke truth; God forbid that  
 ‘ we should think, (much less say) that Christ is  
 ‘ a Liar.

I made answer that Christs body at that time,  
 was really changed into bread, in the same  
 manner as it was at other times really changed  
 into a Vine, or a door, or many other things  
 which in Scripture he gives himself the denomi-  
 nation of: *I am a Vine, I am the Door* saith Christ;  
 and was Christ really such?

‘ No, *said he*, these were metaphorical ex-  
 ‘ pressions.

I answered again, even so is this, and withall  
 I askt him, if it were granted, that there were  
 such a change past upon the Bread, and Wine,  
 then why did it not appear by the form, colour,  
 or taste thereof? or else I must be made to be-  
 lieve it is, and yet it is not, I must believe it is  
 changed, tho’ I perceive by all my senses it is  
 really not changed.

To which he reply’d, ‘ That though the sub-  
 ‘ stance was changed, yet the accidents (of form,  
 ‘ taste, colour, &c.) did remain; in proof of  
 which he could not explain himself to my capaci-  
 ty, (or at leastwise Conviction) with his abun-  
 dance of School-Divinity.

The substance of what I urged against him, is  
 comprehended in a following Letter to one of  
 his Disciples; for which reason I here omit it.

We had other discourse about *Confession to a*  
*Priest*, and about *Concupiscence being no sin*; I af-  
 firming it was, and the occasion or original of  
 other sins.

But

But not very well remembring the same, I'll forbear, having given only the substance of what was argued on both sides, and in some things the express words, though not in all, because of the weakness of my memory.

This took away the ardency and fervour of the forementioned persons in their attempts upon me, and made them almost despair of ever accomplishing such a thing.

Yet they did neglect no opportunity, having some small hopes still, that if I went but frequently to the Priest to visit him, he would in time convert me, ( as they call it ) telling me I was a strange Person that would not hearken to any thing of reason, from such a one as he, who suffered so much for the sake of Christ.

To whom I made answer, that he with others suffered for their offences, in breaking the Laws, and some for horrid Treasons, and barbarous Cruelties, designed against poor innocent Protestants; and as for his Reasons, they were not at all convincing unto me, but did much more confirm me in the Faith I professed.

One of the Gentlewomen, who was a Widow, thinking I had an aversion to their Religion, meerly because it was generally exclaimed against by Protestants; and because I did not understand the choice, and excellent parts thereof; took occasion to shew that it was the portion of Christians to suffer wrongfully for the sake of Christ, and that they were persecuted for Religion, and Conscience sake, and looked for a great blessing at the hands of God, for their Patience, and cheerfulness under their Sufferings.

And to shew the excellency of their Religion,  
lent

lent me a book, wherein her Husband had written many pretty definitions of Moral Vertues, together with some few instructions for a Religious Persons behaviour both alone and in company, with some choice prayers, to some peculiar Saints, and nothing else of any moment.

And resolving that nothing should be wanting to bring about so great a design, she bid me read it, and consider it well, which I thankfully received from her, promising that if I could find greater weight in the reasons they urged, than those which I had already conceived in favour of my own Opinions, I would change; resolving that whatever I found to be really most agreeable to Holy Scripture, should be the matter of my Choice.

To which she reply'd, Lord! do you think we are taught any thing that is against the Scripture?

Yes Madam (said I) I verily believe, and dare venture to prove that you are taught many things which are against Scripture.

Ho, ho! (she replied again) you are deceived in that; and when you have read this Book, you will be convinc'd of the contrary.

The book was above half of it waste Paper, wherein (after I had perused what was written) I did write down a Creed, which I took out of a Book called *The Safe Way*, which is as followeth.

*A Brief Confession of the Churches Faith, contained in a Creed; stedfastly to be believed by every true Roman Catholick, and to be added to the Nicene Creed; being prescribed by Pope Pius the Fourth, to be received with an Oath, and according to the form of the Apostles Creed, is divided into these Twelve Articles.*

*First*, The Apostolical, and Ecclesiastical Traditions, and other Observances and Institutions of the Church of Rome, do I firmly admit and embrace.

*Secondly*, The sacred Scriptures according to that sense, which our holy Mother the Church hath holden, and doth hold, (whose office it is to Judge of the true sense, and interpretation of Holy Scripture) do I admit, neither will I ever receive or expound it, but according to the uniform consent of the Fathers.

*Thirdly*, I do also profess that there be truly and really seven Sacraments of the New Law, Instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, and necessary to the Salvation of Mankind, (though all be not necessary for every man) that is to say Baptisme, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extremum Unction, Order, and Marriage; and that



‘that they confer Grace, and that among these  
 ‘*Baptisme, Confirmation, Order*, cannot be reite-  
 ‘rated without Sacrilege; also I receive, and  
 ‘approve the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Ca-*  
 ‘*tholick Church*, used in the solemn Administra-  
 ‘tion of all the aforesaid Sacraments.

‘*Fourthly*, All and every the things which, con-  
 ‘cerning Original Sin, and Justification, were  
 ‘defined, and declared in the Holy Council of  
 ‘*Trent*, I embrace, and receive.

‘*Fifthly*, Also I Confess that in the Mass is  
 ‘offered unto God a true, proper, and Propiti-  
 ‘atory Sacrifice for the Quick and the Dead.

‘*Sixthly*, And that in the Holy *Eucharist*,  
 ‘is truly, really, and substantially the Body  
 ‘and Blood, with the Soul, and Divinity of our  
 ‘Lord Jesus Christ, and that there is made a  
 ‘conversion of the whole substance of the Bread  
 ‘into his Holy Body, and of the Wine into his  
 ‘Holy Blood; which conversion the *Catholick*  
 ‘*Church* calleth *Transubstantiation*: I confess also,  
 ‘that under one kind only, all, and whole Christ,  
 ‘and the true Sacrament is received.

‘*Seventhly*, I do constantly hold, that there is  
 ‘a Purgatory, and that the Souls detained there  
 ‘are holpen by the suffrages of the Faithful.

‘*Eighthly*, And alwayes that the Saints reign-  
 ‘ing with Christ, are to be worshipped, and  
 ‘prayed unto and that they offer their Prayers to  
 ‘God for us, and that their Reliques are to be  
 ‘worshipped.

‘*Ninthly*, And most firmly I avouch, that the  
 ‘Images of Christ, and the mother of God al-  
 ‘wayes a Virgin, and other Saints, are to be  
 ‘had and retained, and that to them due honour,  
 ‘and veneration is to be given.

‘*Tenthly*,

'*Tenthly*. Also that the power of indulgences  
'was left by Christ in the Church, and I affirm  
'the use thereof wholsom to Christs People.

'*Eleventhly*, That the Holy *Catholick* and *Apo-  
stolick Roman Church* is, the Mother and Mistres  
'of all Churches I acknowledge; And I vow,  
'and swear true Obedience to the Bishop of  
'*Rome*, the Successor of *St. Peter*. the Prince of  
'the *Apostles*, and the Vicar of *Iesus Christ*.

'*Twelfthly*, And all other things likewise, I do  
'undoubtedly receive and confels, which are de-  
'livered, defined, and declared by the sacred  
'*Canons*, and *General Councils*, and especially the  
'*Holy Council of Trent*; and withall I condemn,  
'reject, and accurse, all things that are contrary  
'herunto, and what Heresies soever are condem-  
'ned, rejected, and accursed by the Church; and  
'that I will be careful this true *Catholick Faith*,  
'(out of which no man can be saved, which at  
'this time I willingly profess, and truly hold)  
'be constantly (with Gods help) retained, and  
'confels'd, whole and entire to the last gaspe;  
'and by those that are under me, or such as I shall  
'have charge over in my Calling, holden, taught,  
'and preached to the utmost of my Power; I  
'the said *N.* promise, vow, and swear, so God  
'me help, and his Holy Gospel.

Our pleasure is that these present Letters according  
to Custom, be read in our Apostolick Chancery, and  
that they may be the more easily known unto all men,  
that they be there copied, and imprinted: It shall not  
be lawful therefore for any man to infringe this our  
Will and Commandment, or by audacious boldness  
to contrary the same, which if any man shall presume

to attempt, let him know that he shall incur the indignation of Almighty God, and of St. Peter and St. Paul his blessed Apostles.

Died at Rome in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord, 1564. And in the 4th. year of our Popacy. Feil. Cardinalis Cusini, Cus. Gloriorini.

When I had writ this out, I did read it verbatim to her; which made her admire at the fudgements of the alterations, supposing I had read it as the particulars of my own present belief; highly extolling the same in every particular of it, hoping I was now turned.

Yet could she not tell what to think of me notwithstanding, for though she had hope, yet it was mixed with a great deal of distrust.

A few days after I pray'd her to lend me the Book again, more thoroughly to consider some things therein, which she readily condescended to: And then I did again write in the waste Paper, by way of a Letter my apprehensions of that Popish Creed, (which I had before rehearsed unto her) in order to put an end to all our debates, which is as followeth.

To Mrs. Carpenter, Widow; who is  
the Owner of this Book: Grace, Truth,  
and Peace, be multiply'd through Jesus  
Christ our Lord.

Madam,

Considering seriously the value of a Soul, (which  
alone is worth more then a world,) I endeavor  
to shew you the danger your precious Soul is in, of be-  
ing exposed, not only to the flames of Purgatory, but  
hell it self; by adhering to, and embracing of a  
Faith, which is opposite to the true and sound Faith of  
Jesus Christ.

For that confession of Faith which you own, and  
receive as good and orthodox, may justly be called the  
Antichristian Faith, it being no way grounded upon  
the Word of God, but is contrary thereto, as will  
plainly appear by considering the particulars thereof.

'The first Article, is concerning the Lawfulness  
'of Ecclesiastical Traditions, and other obser-  
'vances, and institutions of the Church.

'How can that be lawful in the Worship, and  
'Service of God, which he hath not command-  
'ed in his Holy Word, when it is made a matter  
'of Faith, and necessary to our Salvation, as all  
'those Traditions of the Church of Rome are.

'Those written Traditions that are delivered  
'by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures of the old  
'and New Testament, I receive and embrace



‘with all my Soul all others of humane invention,  
 ‘*(that are made necessary to Salvation.)* I disown  
 ‘and reject as sinful, and superstitious for these  
 ‘following reasons.

First, ‘Because the Scriptures being the Word  
 ‘of God, (as all the Catholicks do grant) is a  
 ‘perfect guide to direct us in all things necessary  
 ‘to Salvation; and if so, what need we other  
 ‘Traditions, Observances, or Institutions, be-  
 ‘sides those of Gods own appointing; It is need-  
 ‘less.

Secondly, ‘It is sinful and superstitious, yea,  
 ‘and abominably wicked to introduce the Tradi-  
 ‘tions, Observances, and Institutions of Men,  
 ‘into the Worship and Service of God, because  
 ‘First They argue a defect in God, and that he  
 ‘gave us an imperfect rule to walk by, which will  
 ‘be a great weakness for us to imagine, for God is  
 ‘perfection it self, all his works are perfect, espe-  
 ‘cially his Laws: Psalm 19. 7. *The Law of the*  
 ‘*Lord is perfect;* ‘Therefore if there be a necessi-  
 ‘ty of these Traditions, Observances, and Insti-  
 ‘tutions of the Church in the Worship and Ser-  
 ‘vice of God, (further than he hath given liber-  
 ‘ty) then is the Scripture no sufficient rule, but  
 ‘an imperfect thing.

‘Nay, Moreover by this account it must be  
 ‘false in the testimony it gives of its own suffi-  
 ‘ciency.

‘Is there any thing that is necessary to Salva-  
 ‘tion, that Christ our Prophet hath not revea-  
 ‘led to us in his holy word? Surely no. John 5.  
 ‘39. *Search the Scriptures, in them is all things ne-*  
 ‘*cessary to Eternal Life;* for which see Heb. 3. 2.  
 ‘compar’d with the sixth verse.

‘Christ

Christ is the ruler of the Church, the house of God, and whereas *Moses being but a Servant, was faithful in his house, much more Christ being a Son over the house of God, was faithful*: And if he was faithful, then certainly he did not omit any thing that was necessary to the Salvation of our Souls.

Yea, and moreover, *They are of themselves sufficient to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work,*

These things being so that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and as such the only infallible rule to walk by, which word of truth doth testify that of themselves they are sufficient to guide us in all things necessary to Salvation.

All humane Inventions, Traditions, Observations, and Institutions, are therefore not only unnecessary, but sinful and superstitious, tho by a *Pope*, (the Head of the *Roman Church*) made an Article of Faith, and placed in the front of so pretended a Glorious confession.

Thirdly, To put it out of question that this Article is not of God, but from the Devil; It will evidently appear, in that it is contrary to the express will and pleasure of Almighty God. For,

First, God hath given us examples of his dreadful displeasure against such that dare presume to worship him in a way that he hath commanded them not, as *Nadab*, and *Abihu*, whom God destroyed with fire from Heaven, because they offered something to him in a way that he commanded them not. Exodus 10.

Secondly, God doth upbraid a people for so doing, and exclaims against them, saying, *Who hath*

‘hath required these things from you; and saith the  
 ‘Lord, they did that which I commanded them not,  
 ‘neither came it into my mind, that they should com-  
 ‘mit such abomination, and cause the people to sin,  
 ‘Jer. 32. 31.

‘God will have none set up their inventions  
 ‘by his Institutions, and Christ saith expressly,  
 ‘in vain do ye worship me, who teach for Do-  
 ‘ctrines the commandments of men, Matth. 15. 9.  
 ‘Mar. 7. 7, 8. And the Apostle St. Peter saith in  
 ‘the 1 Pet. 1. 18. That the Conversation of such is a  
 ‘vain conversation who are zealous for the Traditions  
 ‘of their Fathers.

3. ‘But above all God pronounceth dreadful  
 ‘Anathema’s, and Curses upon all such who in-  
 ‘troduce any thing into the Worship and Service  
 ‘of God, that he allows not of, and is not re-  
 ‘vealed in the Word of God: To the Law, and  
 ‘to the Testimony, if it be not according to this  
 ‘word, it is because there is no truth in it.

‘All those Traditions, Observances, and Insti-  
 ‘tutions of men, that are not according to the  
 ‘Scriptures are accursed of God Gal. 1. 6, 7, 8, 9.  
 ‘and Revel. 22. 19. Curses and Plagues are there  
 ‘threatned to such, as preach up what the Gos-  
 ‘pel doth not enjoin.

‘And truly when persons neglect to search the  
 ‘word of God, and slight it, not loving the  
 ‘truth according to the Scripture; It is but just  
 ‘with God to send them strong delusions, that they  
 ‘should believe a lye, that they all might be damned to-  
 ‘gether, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in  
 ‘unrighteousness; 1 Thess. 2. 10, 11, 12. ‘And let  
 ‘this suffice to prove that this first Article is not  
 ‘of God, but from the Devil.

2. As to the second Article, which is to receive the Sacred Scriptures in the sense, which the Church hath, and doth hold, and according to the uniform consent of the Fathers; all that I have to say unto it is only this,

That God hath given the Scriptures for all that can read them, he *commandeth all to search into them, and highly commends those that do so. He pronounceth them blessed that read, and they that hear the words thereof, giving the greatest encouragement for all to study them.* John 5. 39. Acts 17. 11. Rev. 1. 3.

And all things necessary to mans Salvation, are so plainly delivered, that he that runs, may read, and understand them.

Moreover, he *giveth his Spirit which helpeth our infirmities, by which we come to understand the deep things of God.*

Neither is the Faith of any man in this matter, to be subjected (*volens, volens,*) to the Judgment or determination of the Church, or any other whatsoever; because that Faith which is grounded upon Humane Testimony, is but Humane Faith, and will not profit unto Salvation: And such is that implicit Faith of believing as the Church believeth, a Faith that cannot save.

3. The third Article (which enjoyneth the belief of seven Sacraments, that is Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, extreme Unction, Order, and Marriage, and that these confer Grace, and that the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of Rome used in the Administration of them are good, and to be embraced:



sed: the belief of which) is very dangerous, and pernicious: For, Christ hath instituted but two Sacraments in the Gospel, viz. Baptisme, and the Holy Eucharist, (or Supper of the Lord), as for the rest, they are no more Sacraments than Praying, and Singing, or any other Ordinance of Christ; and the reason is, because by some outward visible sign of Christs own appointing, is represented to the Faith of a Christian, an inward Spiritual Grace: As for Example,

'In *Baptism* the outward sign which Christ hath instituted, is washing with Water in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; which represents and signifies to the Faith of a Christian the washing of his Soul from the guilt of sin by the Blood of Jesus, and the cleansing it from the filth of sin, by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

'So likewise in the *Lords Supper*, the signs which Christ hath appointed, are Bread and Wine, which do signifie and represent the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which are by Faith apprehended, and applied to the Soul for its nourishment, and growth in Grace,

2. 'That these Sacraments confer Grace, is false: For the Spirit of God works Grace in the heart ordinarily by hearing the word preached, *Rom. 10. 17.* and extraordinarily by sundry remarkable providences: The Sacraments cannot confer Grace, if we duly consider these two things.

First, 'That the Sacraments are but *Seals of the Covenant*, to which there must be a right had, before

‘fore there can be a right to the Sacraments, the Seals thereof; Rom. 4. 11. and we can’t have a right to the Covenant, but by Faith; therefore Faith must necessarily go before our having a right to any of the Sacraments.

‘All Gods covenanted people are Believers, and the promise is only to them and their seed, and as many as the Lord our God shall call, to be partakers of the Grace of the Gospel.

‘Therefore the Sacraments do not confer Grace, but increase, and strengthen that Grace which is already infused into their hearts by the Spirit of God.

2. ‘If the Sacraments confer Grace, why then are so many of the most eminent Roman Catholics, who have been partakers of all the seven Sacraments, so graceless, and so wicked? So bloody and cruel, and so unwearied in plotting against Christians, who hold not their Opinions; I mean the Pope, and Jesuits, with the rest of that wicked Tribe.

‘And experience tells us, that many amongst us, who are Baptized, Married, and have been at the Holy Eucharist, are still vile, and sinful, wicked, and abominable.

‘Therefore the Sacraments do not confer Grace, and in believing of it, what is it else but to believe a lye?

‘And as for the Rites, and Ceremonies of the Church of Rome, in the Administration of all these Sacraments; you profess them to be good and lawful, whereas they are but superstitious heaps of mens inventions, which are condemned, rejected, and accursed by the word of God,

God, as hath been shewn in answering the first Article.

Therefore they that imitate the example of Christ most exactly, do that which is most acceptable in the sight of God, who is a jealous God, in matters relating to his Worship and Service.

4. The Fourth Article, (Which is, that all the things that were defined and declared by the Council of Trent concerning Original Sin and Justification, are to be received, and embraced.)

I know not what the Council of Trent did declare, or what definitions they gave of those profound Gospel Mysteries; therefore I can say nothing in answer thereunto.

5. The Fifth Article, (Which is, that in the Mass is offered unto God a true proper, and propitiatory Sacrifice for the Quick, and the Dead.) I will answer this by proposing a Question, and will lay down some plain Scriptures that condemn it; the question is this.

Is not this Doctrine ascended from the Infernal Lake, through the instigation of the Devil; since it renders the perfect Sacrifice of Christ an imperfect thing? Especially when the Scriptures do fully and plainly declare against it.

And this Sacrifice you say it not only for the Living, but for the dead also; which is a most infamous, wicked, and anti-Scriptural Doctrine, as will appear from these Scriptures following. Rev. 14. 13. Blessed are the dead that dye in the Lord, from henceforth saith the Spirit, they rest from their labours.

If

‘ If the Saints who dye in the Lord, are blessed after death, and rest from all their labours, what need they of any further Sacrifice, or prayers to be used for them, especially if they be thoroughly purg’d from sin, which the Scripture assures us they are, *Rom. 6. 7.* For he that is dead, is freed from sin.

And as this Doctrine is unprofitable for the dead, so it is hurtful for the living, because they derogate from that perfect, and compleat Sacrifice of Christ, which was offered once for all; *Heb. 10. 10.* For Christ after he had offered one Sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; *Heb. 10. 12.* and *Heb. 14. 15.* Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, *Heb. 9. 28.*

And if Christ by his once offering up himself a Sacrifice, hath for ever perfected those that are sanctified? What need then the Sacrifice of the Mass?

The Apostle in *Heb. 9. 8, 9, 10. verses*, proves from the example of the Jews Sacrifices, the insufficiency of them to take away sin. The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest, whilst the first Tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure of the time then present: In which were offered both Gifts and Sacrifices, that could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them, until the times of Reformation.

‘ This



‘This is just like the Popish Sacrifice of the Mass, which God saith can never take away sin; though the Priest standeth daily *Ministring*, and offering oftentimes the same Sacrifice, which can never take away sins, Heb. 10. 11.

‘These dayly Sacrifices of the Mass, (which the Church calleth a true, proper, and propitiatory Sacrifice,) is repugnant to the Word of God; for if this Sacrifice must be so frequently offered, then must Christ have often suffered since the Foundation of the World; But now in the end of the world hath he appeared once, [and but once] to put away sin by the Sacrifice of himself.

‘Therefore, If an Angel should come and preach up this Doctrine which Christ and his Apostles have never taught; let him be accursed; Or if the Pope, or any of his Disciples do preach up, or teach, in matters of Faith and Salvation, which Christ and his Apostles have not appointed in the Scriptures; Let them be accursed; Gal. 1. 1.

6. ‘The sixth Article is concerning the real presence, called *Transubstantiation*, in which you believe there is really, and substantially the Body, and Blood, with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is a conversion of the whole substance of the Bread and Wine, into his Holy Body and Blood; and that under one kind only, all, and whole Christ, and the true Sacrament is received.

‘What dreadful and dangerous Errors are here, that strike at the very foundation of Christianity it self, as will plainly appear.

First,

‘*First*, In that it destroys the Humane Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.

‘*Secondly*, In that it renders Faith useless.

‘*Thirdly*, In that many absurdities and strange contradictions will necessarily follow the belief thereof.

‘I will speak a little to each of these.

‘*First*, This Doctrine destroys the Humane Nature of Christ, as will appear plainly in that Christ took to him a true Body and Soul, which is the Humane Nature that he assumed to himself; and if the Humane Nature of Christ consists in his having a true natural Body and Soul, then according to the nature of a Body, it is finite, and cannot be in two or more places at one and the same time.

‘Although Christ as God (with respect to his Divinity) is every where present, yet in regard of his Humanity, he is only in heaven, which (the Scripture saith) *must contain him till the general Day of Judgment*.

‘That all these things are so there is sufficient proof from Holy Scripture, as *Heb. 2. 14, 15, 16, 17. Heb. 10. 5. Mat. 26. 38. Acts 3. 21.*

‘Therefore what prodigious Folly is it, to suppose the Body of Christ, to be in Heaven, and on Earth, at the same Instant, yea and in divers places upon Earth too, where the Sacrament is administred at one time.

‘The whole Body and Blood and Soul of Christ, (by this account) is in *Rome*, in *Paris*, in *London*, and a hundred other place, (where

‘ (where the Eucharist is received ) at one, and  
 ‘ the same instant of time.

‘ If this be not the most Ridiculous nonsense  
 ‘ in the World, I know not what is ; for it is as  
 ‘ ridiculous as to say that Mrs. *Carpenter*, is at  
 ‘ *Tork*, at *Bristol*, at *London*, and every Town in  
 ‘ *England* at this very moment.

‘ How absurd it would be to affirm such a thing,  
 ‘ I will leave you to Judge, even so it is to affirm  
 ‘ Christs real Presence in the Sacrament, for it  
 ‘ confounds, and utterly destroys the Humane  
 ‘ Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ ; therefore it  
 ‘ is a false Doctrine.

‘ 2. This Doctrine of Transubstantiation ren-  
 ‘ ders Faith useless, even that Faith by which the  
 ‘ Believer feeds on Christ.

‘ If you believe, that the Bread and the Wine  
 ‘ is changed into the real Substance of Christs  
 ‘ Body and Blood, you have no further need  
 ‘ of Faith, but a Carnal, and Corporeal feeding  
 ‘ upon him ; whereas the true Believer doth by  
 ‘ Faith apprehend whole Christ, and all his Bene-  
 ‘ fits, that he hath purchased by his Blood, un-  
 ‘ der those Elements of Bread, and Wine, and  
 ‘ doth make Application of them to the health  
 ‘ and advantage of his own Soul.

‘ Christs Body and Blood is represented by  
 ‘ those Elements, and there is work enough for  
 ‘ Faith, to apprehend, and apply him, and  
 ‘ thereby to feed upon him.

‘ But if those signs are changed into the things  
 ‘ which they signify and represent, then Faith is  
 ‘ become wholly useless, and by consequence it is  
 ‘ no Sacrament.

‘ 3. If this Doctrine of Transubstantiation  
 ‘ were

were believed, there would follow most horrid absurdities, and contradictions, as for Example.

First, If there be no eating Christs Flesh nor drinking of his Blood but by receiving the Eucharist; then all such as dye young or before they receive this Sacrament, must needs Perish; for Christ himself saith, *that he who eateth not the Flesh of the Son of man, and drinketh not his Blood, shall not see life.*

2. On the other hand, all such who stedfastly believe the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and receive this Sacrament, must certainly be saved, because *they eat of Christs flesh, and drink of his Blood*; who hath promised to all such *everlasting life.*

If these things were granted, what strange absurdities would there necessarily be in Christs Words.

True Believers (that have obtained special Grace from God) would be excluded Heaven, and a way prepared for Drunkards, Swearers, Whoremongers, and the most vile Debauched Persons; for multitudes of such are in the communion of the Church of Rome, who do prefer the Doctrine of Transubstantiation as dear as their lives. It is a Rock on which thousands of precious Souls have split themselves to all Eternity.

Wherefore I beseech you Madam, do not build your Faith upon any humane Testimony, neither let your Ghostly Father debar you from fulfilling the Will of Christ, which is, that you *should search the Scriptures, and understand them* so, as that there may be a glorious Harmony, and



and sweet Agreement between one place, and another.

But in the Church of *Rome* they have so far Apostatized, as to make the Scriptures serve only to promote their own carnal Lusts, and Interests, and have unanimously declared, that it is not fit for the Laity to read in them; whereby the poor innocent People are deprived of the good Word of God which alone (by the help of the Spirit) is able to save their Souls.

But to return and shew further what gross absurdities will follow the Belief of this Doctrine.

3. If Transubstantiation were true, then the glorious Body of Christ would be subject to Corruption; because the Bread and Wine after consecration will corrupt, as experience can testify; which is impossible for the body of Christ to do; which was (as all believers shall be) raised incorruptible.

4. If this Doctrine were true, then the Body of Christ must be Infinite; else how could all the World in all Ages feed upon it. But the Scriptures declare, that Christ took to his Divinity a true, natural, and finite body and soul; therefore this eating must be Spiritual.

5. If the Bread and Wine be really converted into Christs Body and Blood, how came it to pass that the Apostles did discern Christs real Body apart from the Bread and Wine, when they did first receive it at his own hands.

Was Christs Body and Blood, then in the Bread and Wine? or was his Blood in his Veins,

veins, and his Body distinct from the Bread and Wine, even before their eyes,

This is a question will puzzle the wisest of the Champions, to give a genuine, and satisfactory answer thereunto. Either, there must be two Christs, one that did institute the Ordinance, and another that was converted into Bread and Wine, or else the Bread and Wine must be signsto rerepresent the Body and Blood of that true Christ, who was then speaking to them.

6. If the substance of the Bread and Wine be changed into Christ's Body and Blood, and there remains no more Bread and Wine in the Sacrament after Consecration, then why doth it not assume the form, colour, and taste thereof?

It would have been as easie for Christ to have changed the accidents as the substance, which would have made it a real miracle, and have commanded belief, as well as the miracle of changing Water into Wine.

For they who were the Spectators of that miracle, did taste, and see that the same which was water before, was now really changed, into pure Wine.

Do but conceive this miracle according to the nature of Transubstantiation, and you will see the damnable cheating of the Popish Clergy in blinding the people in this respect; for they say, though the substance be changed, yet the accidents remain; (to wit,) The form, colour, taste, &c. which is too weak an argument to perswade any honest Protestant to acquiesce in their Judgment.

For it is plain, that if Christ himself had endeavoured to make them who were at the Feast

of *Cana in Galilee*, to believe that the substance of the Water was changed into Wine, though the accidents had remained of the taste, and colour of water; the people would have laughed him to scorn, and lookt upon him as a deceiver, or only a pretender to work miracles.

But the water was really changed, and that change did visibly appear, both in colour, and taste.

But the Priests to keep the people in ignorance, perswade them that in this Sacrament, though the accidents of Bread and Wine remain, yet the substance is changed; because Christ saith this is my Body, will you make Christ a lyer? say they; whereas alas! They consider not that Christ makes use of many Metaphors to represent Spiritual things by, giving to them the denomination of the things signified by them; examples whereof we have sufficiently in the Holy Scriptures.

Seventhly, and Lastly, To add no more of the absurdities this Doctrine will admit of.

If the signs be changed into the things signified, where is the Sacrament?

Your Priests by disputing for Transubstantiation, have robbed you of one of the Sacraments, and consequently of a Seal of the Covenant of Grace, which seals unto all Believers their right to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the Heavens for them.

Thus disputing for the shadow, you lose the substance of the Ordinance, and you will never find it, till you strike hands with the Protestants, in believing that we eat Christ's Flesh, and drink his Blood spiritually; and by Faith,

as it is represented to us under those Elements of Bread and Wine.

And the breaking of the Bread, and the pouring out of the Wine do most admirably represent the Passion, Sufferings, and Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this Sacrament we have by Faith sweet Communion with the Father, we feed upon the Son; and are feasted with the Joys of the Holy Ghost: Therefore it is not a bare eating, and drinking of Bread, and Wine as you term it; (for we distinguish it from common Bread and Wine, as it is set apart for a more glorious, and excellent use;) but Christ, and all his benefits, (being the things signified) we receive and apply by Faith, for our nourishment and growth in Grace.

I hope here is enough to convince you of the vanity and folly of this most absurd Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

There remaineth the latter clause of this Article, to have a word spoken to it, and then I'll proceed to the rest, and that is this.

You believe that under one kind only, whole Christ and the true Sacrament is received.

What is this but perfectly to contradict the positive command of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Drink ye all of it.*

But your Priests, as the followers of Antichrist, do in this, as well as other things, directly oppose our Lord Jesus Christ, whose example we are commanded to follow, and if we love him, we will keep his Commandements.



‘The Seventh Article is the belief of Purgatory, and that the Saints detained there are holpen by the suffrages of the faithful.

‘To admit of the Doctrine of Purgatory, is no less dangerous than all the rest; for it makes way in an especial manner for two great errors.

‘The first is building our Faith upon Humane Testimony, there being no such place mentioned throughout the whole word of God; but after Death the Judgment; the Scripture saith, *as death leaves us, so Judgment shall find us*; which being true, there is therefore no Purgatory.

‘And they that are dead, are freed from sin, that is, The Souls of all the Saints, that are dead, are freed from sin, and do immediately pass into Glory, Heb. 9. 27. Rom. 6. 7.

‘It must be duly considered that all Believers are Members of Christ’s Body, and as such, They are holy as he is holy, (though not in the same measure) for they partake of the same Spirit, by which they are sanctified and cleansed from all sin, before they depart out of this world. 1 Thes. 4. 8. 2 Thes. 2. 13.

2. ‘As Purgatory hath no sure Foundation in Scripture, so it casts a great deal of contempt upon Jesus Christ, and also upon the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier.

‘God the Father he hath given all the Elect in to the hands of Jesus Christ; *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no ways cast out*, John 6. 37.

‘Christ he undertook to redeem all the Elect, by making full satisfaction to the Justice of his Father for all their sins, and by purchasing for them by his Death and Sufferings, a right to all

‘all the Glories, and Priviledges of the Children  
‘of God.

‘And the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Fa-  
‘ther and the Son, was to work upon their hearts,  
‘to engage them to comply with the terms pro-  
‘posed in the Gospel, and to sanctifie them  
‘throughout in Soul, in Body, and in Spirit, that  
‘they may be offered to the Father without spot or  
‘wrinkle, 2 Pet. 3. 14. 1 Thes. 5. 23. Ephes.  
‘5. 27.

‘This Doctrine doth directly oppose Purgato-  
‘ry, merit pennance, &c. because Christ having  
‘perfectly accomplished mans redemption, by  
‘paying the full price: There remained nothing  
‘on the Believers part, but a sincere Gospel Obe-  
‘dience, in this present life; and though it be  
‘but imperfect, yet Christ’s satisfaction, and in-  
‘tercession being perfect and meritorious; they  
‘at Death immediately pass into Glory, Luk.  
‘16. 22. and 23. 43.

‘This Doctrine of Purgatory rendring Christ’s  
‘sufferings insufficient, and the work of the Spi-  
‘rit imperfect, is therefore a false Doctrine.

‘The Eighth and Ninth Article are most abo-  
‘minably corrupt, and erroneous; for they main-  
‘tain the lawfulness of worshipping Saints, their  
‘images, and reliques, which is far worse than  
‘Heathenish Idolatry, because it is against the  
‘clear light of the Scripture; Revelations 19.  
‘10. And I fell at his feet to worship him, and  
‘he said unto me, see thou do it not, I am thy fellow  
‘servant, and of thy Brethren that have the Testi-  
‘mony of Jesus; worship God. So Revel. 22. 9.

‘And as for worshipping Reliques, or Images.  
‘read Rom. 1. 21. to the end of the Chapter. Be-

'cause when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but professing themselves to be wise, they became Fools, and changed the Glory of the Incorruptible God into an Image made like unto corruptible man; wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, &c.

Who changed the truth of God into a lye, and worshipped and served the Creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen. For this cause God gave them up to vile affections, &c. To the end of the Chapter.

'There it shews what floods of wickedness, and error, this Heathenish Doctrine (of worshipping Creatures and Images) leads unto.

'10. Concerning the power of indulgence, which is another curled link of that Antichristian chain.

'Had I leisure, I could easily make appear, that it is a Doctrine which makes way for the greatest of Impieties, making men desperate in the commission of all manner of Treasons, Murders, and wickednesses whatsoever, as appears too evident at this day, by the great calamities that are amongst us, through the daring insolence of the men of Rome, being encouraged by the great indulgence of the Pope, that man of sin, who hath exalted himself against our Lord Jesus Christ.

'The Eleventh Article is not worthy of any answer; It being only a proud imperious boasting of the Roman Church, who would be accounted the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, which she is so far from, that she is mystically Babylon the great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth.

'And

And the Pope who terms himself the Successor of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and the Vicar of Jesus Christ: Is that man of Sin, the Son of Perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signes and lying Wonders, 2 Thes. 2. 3, 4, 9.

Or the Beast mentioned in Rev. 13. And all such as vow and swear obedience to him, receive the mark of the Beast, Rev. 14. 9, 10.

The twelfth Article comprehends all other Errors and Popish Devices, carrying in it most vehement deprecations, as well against the Holy God and his Word, as against me who do oppose this Faith as Antichristan; [I condemn, reject and accurse whatever is contrary hereunto.]

Observe, Madam, what strange expressions are made use of; and how you must bind your self with an oath, and a curse, to abide steadfast in the belief of whatever the Church shall impose on you, how contrary sever it be to the Word of God, which is directly opposite to this Creed, whose original was from that impious Pope, falsely called Pope Pius the fourth, in the year 1564.

Madam, Having now run over all the parts of this Creed, which you have so highly extolled, and commended, I now further presume to cast three or four considerations before you.

First, Be pleased to consider that what I am to deliver, is but of love to your Soul; Love constraineth me to speak and write unto you, 'tis a love of Pity and Compassion, for really



‘ it grieves me to see you led blindfold in the  
 ‘ way that leads to destruction, whence I am  
 ‘ endued to do my utmost to reduce you (if  
 ‘ God see meet) into the way to true Felicity.

‘ Secondly, Consider that the way into which  
 ‘ I would reduce you, is the way that God hath  
 ‘ appointed, even the Holy Word of God, the  
 ‘ Scriptures, from which you are far enough  
 ‘ turned aside.

‘ Thirdly, Consider that the Scriptures discover,  
 ‘ that an union with Christ by Faith, is absolutely  
 ‘ necessary to Salvation.

‘ All such as are united to Christ are members  
 ‘ of his Body, and of the true *Catholick Church*,  
 ‘ of what Religion soever they profess themselves  
 ‘ to be.

‘ They are such as are born of God, convinced  
 ‘ by his Spirit, of Sin, of Righteousness, and of  
 ‘ Judgment; they see so much of the evil of Sin,  
 ‘ that they loath and abhor it; nay they see  
 ‘ themselves utterly lost, and undone by reason  
 ‘ thereof; in a hopeless and helpless condition;  
 ‘ exposed to the Wrath of God, the just desert of  
 ‘ their iniquities; and they see that none can  
 ‘ help them out of that deplorable condition but  
 ‘ Jesus Christ alone: *for there is no other name under  
 ‘ heaven given among men whereby they can be  
 ‘ saved*, Acts 4. 12. Therefore they see an absolute  
 ‘ need of Christ, to deliver them from the  
 ‘ Wrath of God.

‘ And are endued to go to God with strong  
 ‘ cries for an Interest in Christ, and are heartily  
 ‘ willing to receive him, upon the terms of the  
 ‘ Gospel for King, Priest and Prophet.

‘ These are the seeds of Faith, which are in  
 ‘ order

order to Justification, upon which Sanctification, (which appears in a Holy Life and Conversion) doth immediately follow; and all these are signs which do accompany the new Birth; without which our Saviour saith, *none can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

And if you have not found it thus with you, then are you still under the power of Sin, not born of God, and consequently as such cannot be saved.

But blessed be God I can experience these things in some measure to be wrought in my Soul, and thence have comfortable grounds to hope, that I am born of God, united to Christ, and made a member of the Universal invisible *Catholick Church*, which is the mystical Body of Christ, out of which there is no Salvation, the Members whereof are and may be bitter enemies to the Follies and Superstitions of the Church of *Rome*, which at the best is but part of the Church of Christ, and a very corrupt part too.

Fourthly and Lastly, Consider if the corruptions of the Church of *Rome* be greater either in Doctrine or Practice or both, than other Churches of Christ, (as I have sufficiently proved) it is your Duty then to relinquish the communion thereof, and to joyn with that Church, that you are convinc'd in your Conscience is most agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, both in Doctrine and Discipline; else you fall under that dreadful curse, *Cursed be the deceiver that hath in his Flock a Male, and voweth and offereth to the Lord a corrupt thing.*

God will have the best, and if a man apprehend

‘hend one way of Worship to be more pure, and  
 ‘holy, and conformable to the Word of God  
 ‘than another; God will have that; for he ac-  
 ‘counts it the greatest Sacrilege to deprive him  
 ‘of the best, which is his due.

‘When I was under these convictions, I was  
 ‘induced to seek out for sound Doctrine, and  
 ‘such a way to worship God in, as I apprehend-  
 ‘ed to be in all respects agreeable to his most holy  
 ‘Will, revealed in his holy Word.

*Dear Madam, I will add no more, but conclude  
 with my prayers to God Almighty, for your Souls  
 safety, and remain,*

*Your most grateful, and  
 March the humble Servant,  
 3d, 168.* *J. Jones.*

When I came to deliver the Book to her again,  
 I told her I had writ something else in it, and re-  
 solved to become of her Religion, provided Mr.  
 Micarty could by Scripture and strength of Argu-  
 ment confute the same, and that it was written  
 to convince her of the dangerous errors she  
 lay under by relying upon the integrity she sup-  
 posed to be in her spiritual Guides, without ex-  
 amining the holy Scriptures, the Rule of Faith  
 and Manners.

And asking me what I had writ, I told her I  
 had writ my real Judgment concerning that Po-  
 pish Creed which I had examined by Scripture, and  
 found to be most false and erroneous: insomuch  
 that it ought to be abominated by every true  
 Christian, and that nothing but a Diabolical im-  
 plicit Faith could dispense with it; it being so  
 contrary to the holy Scriptures.

She

She reply'd, That I was not fit to be the Judge of Scripture.

I answered her, That I would refer what I had writ, to any *Papish Priest* to give an answer thereunto; and would readily embrace whatever of truth I found therein.

And if she pleased I would read distinctly to her what I had writ, which she condescended unto.

But so strong is the power of Satan with such, whom he hath deceived, that he deprives them of the true use of their Reason and Understanding, which made her say to this effect, That all the World should never perswade her but that the *Church of Rome was the only way to Eternal life.*

Well! (said I) then 'tis in vain to hold any further controversie, since I am firmly establish'd in the contrary opinion.

Since which time we never had any eager disputations about matters of Religion, for finding me so contrary to them, made them conclude that all their labour was in vain.

After this (tho they were much offended at me) I enjoyed peace and quietness, having brought them to an absolute despair, of prevailing against me; and the Providence of God removed the place of my Habitation, that I had not the opportunity of visiting them as formerly, nor they of making any further attempts upon me.

*O Almighty God, and gracious Father, thou hast wonderfully exalted thy rich and free grace in preserving me from every evil way which is not according to thy Holy Word.*

*Thou hast kept me from the blindness, and Idolatry*  
of



of Papists notwithstanding their attempts upon me, and thou hast also delivered me from the unreasonable practices of dissenters, in which I was taken; and thou hast set me in a sure way, even the way of the Church of England, which is most agreeable to thy most holy word; wherein by thy Grace I may serve thee most acceptably to thy glory, and my Souls peace, and comfort, through Jesus Christ my Lord, and alone blessed Saviour. Amen.

But to flatter the power of Satan withal, whom he hath deceived, that he deceives them of the true end of their Religion and Liberty, and which made her joy to this effect, I that all the World should have perceived her, but that the Church of Rome was the only way to Liberty.

Well! (said I) then tis in vain to hope any further controversy, since I am firmly established in the contrary opinion.

After this, tho they were much offended at me, I enjoyed peace and quietness, having brought them to an absolute desire of preying against me, and the Providence of God removed the place of my habitation, that I had not the opportunity of visiting them as formerly, nor they of sending any further inquiries upon me.

A par-

*A particular Account of the several Debates that happened before I could be satisfied that it was no sin to separate from an Independent, or Congregational Church, to embrace the Religion and Government that is by Law Establish'd in England.*

ALL the while I was an Apprentice, I had no Acquaintance with any Religious, serious People of the *Church of England*, that were capable of shewing sufficient reasons; whereby to convince me that the way of Separation was sinfull.

But did take all opportunities of conversing with those of the separation, whatever their opinions were, (provided they were against *Poery*, and the *Church of England*, and not rigid *Quakers*) they were the Companions I delighted in, and by whose means I strengthened my self exceedingly against the other Parties.

Whose Reasons I judged carnal and of no efficacy in comparison of those which I had already conceived in favour of my own opinions in which I thought I was fully establish'd.

Yet when it pleased God that I came to live among *Papists*, I desired to hear all the reason that could be urged in defence of their Opinions, and whatever was according to Scripture I agreed with them in, and embraced.

So

So likewise when God saw fitting that I should come acquainted with serious good Protestants; I was ready to embrace whatever was according to the truth on their side, greatly admiring that Dissenters should represent their Discipline and Worship so corrupt and superstitious, as I was really perswaded it was, till by an impartial Examination I was convinc'd of the contrary.

In examining this matter a great deal of time was taken up, as much as I could redeem from my worldly Affairs.

During a Twelve month, and upwards I was tost up and down upon the raging waves of an unsettl'd Judgment, sometimes raised up with abundance of blind Zeal, and the appearance of sanctity to the highest pitch of independency, and then restor'd to the still and smooth waters of Conformity, where at length Reason, and Conscience forced me to continue.

In this Alteration and change, many a fierce combat I engaged in: My opposers were many, and may be distinguished in three Ranks.

First, Mr. Lobb, and his Congregation.

Secondly, Some of my nearest Relations.

Thirdly, Other Acquaintance among the Non-Conformists.

I have already shew'n particularly the means whereby I came to be convinced of the necessity of conforming to the Church of England, and I gave a hint also of the first debate that happen'd upon the first discovery of my resolution to hold communion with the Church of England, and now come to be more particular in this matter.

Being

Being furnished with Arguments and Reasons sufficient to convince my self, that Conformity was a great Duty, and consequently Separation a formidable sin, made me frequent the Church more than I did formerly, and Mr. Lobb Meeting less, insomuch, that I was lookt upon as a great stranger amongst them; which made Mr. Lobb greatly desirous of an opportunity to discourse with me: And perceiving the same, (at some convenient time) I went and gave him a visit, who being at home, took me up into his Study; where after some discourse past, he began severely to reprove me for Marrying a person of the Church of *England*, without taking his advice antecedent therunto; as also for neglecting to attend upon his Ministry as formerly; labouring to evince the greatness of my sin in so doing, by many particulars.

Which made me declare unto him, that I was dissatisfied in my mind, touching the lawfulness of Separation, believing it was a great sin, and as such I ought to abstain from it, and conform till I were better satisfied, and convinced of the contrary.

He made reply, saying it was an easy matter to prove that they did separate for Conscience sake, and that it was justifiable from Holy Scripture, which was the Rule of the whole of their Religion.

And that he believed my leaving them, and going to the Church of *England*, was more for Domestick peace and quietness, than sense of Duty, or any thing of that Nature.

Which made me discover to him the various methods of Gods Providence in convincing me of this



this great Duty of Conformity (before I had any acquaintance with the person whom he supposed to have drawn me away) namely, the scruples that did arise within me.

First, concerning the Oath I took when I was made free.

Secondly, My being confirm'd by the Bishop of London. And

3. Discouraging with Learned, and Conscientious persons of the Church of England.

These things I insisted on, though not in this order, as the means whereby I was brought to esteem of the Church of England, (to take of that indecent censure, which he had little reason to pass upon me) assuring him further, that it was my earnest desire to be rightly informed in the way of truth, according to the Scriptures.

And if he could convince me, that it was no sin to separate, I would still, notwithstanding continue communion with him.

He answered, That I never was a Member of the Church of England, and therefore could not be said to separate from her, nor be guilty of separation for that reason.

I reply'd that my Father being a Minister of that Church (from whom I received not only my being but a great part of my Education also) and being baptized by him, layd an Obligation upon me to hold Communion with the Church of England, which notwithstanding I did not, and therefore thought my self guilty of Separation.

But he assured me to the contrary, saying, That Baptisme did only initiate persons into the Congregation of Christian Professors, and layd

no restraint upon any ones will from making a choice of a Pastor, and people, to join in fellowship with, at years of Discretion.

And I having freely, and voluntarily made choice of him to be my Pastor, was oblig'd in point of Duty, to attend upon his Ministry: And he in point of Conscience, (so far as in him lay) to endeavour to prevent my Eternal ruine and destruction.

These things (with others of the same nature) sunk deep into my mind, and put me into great consternation of Spirit, fearing lest I should offend God by seeking to withdraw from the Communion of Mr. Lee.

Which made me incapable of resisting those Arguments he made use of to convince me of sin in my procedures.

For with respect to the *Oath* which I took that he told me was my sin, in not considering beforehand the Nature of it, and had great cause to repent.

Though he believed it might be safely taken, upon mature consideration, and was no more then the *Oath of Allegiance*, affirming that their Meetings were no more Conventicles, than the Church of England Assemblies.

And as to my being *confirm'd by the Bishop*: He told me I was under some grievous Temptation, and that it was a foolish and idle thing in me to presume upon it, without taking advice from him, or any of my Brethren.

Saying, It was no Duty, there being many sorts of laying on of hands, used among the Primitive Christians, which are no way obligatory upon Christians at this day, contrary to the A-

nabaptists, as well as others, who bring *Heb. 6. 2.* to prove the same.

But the chiefest thing against me, was my rejecting their early advice, (before my affections were too far gone towards the Church of *England*, which I had in the most sacred manner obliged my self unto, as I would avoid the sin of Schisme in a very high degree) and conferring altogether with those of the Church of *England*, who only endeavoured to corrupt my Judgment, and to draw me away from the purest Gospel worship.

This made me somewhat to fear that I was greatly faulty, yet notwithstanding I was not altogether speechless, though induced to believe the most of what he said; assuring him that I would still adhere to what was truth, when I had heard what both parties had to say for themselves; expressing great fear that not to joyn in Communion with the Church of *England*, when the Higher Powers commanded it, was a great sin.

To which he replied it was no sin, in regard the Higher Powers commanded that which was sinful; declaring that if he could any wise conform without sinning against God, he would most readily do it.

Which made me demand of him, wherein it was a sin to conform.

He made answer that the *terms* (which the Church of *England* made) of Communion with her, were *sinful terms*; the particulars he insisted on, were *kneeling at the Sacrament, and the Cross in Baptisme*.

His Argument to prove that *kneeling at the Sacrament* was a sin; was, that it was never practised in the Church till the Host was worshipped, and Altars invented, it being an Altar gesture, and no less than Image worship, a kneeling down to Bread and Wine.

I greatly admir'd at his affirming so much, though I was then able to say but little against the Logick and Rhetorick he was furnished withal to prove the same.

As to *the Cross in Baptisme*, he affirmed that it was an Ordinance upon an Ordinance, the first part being Christ's Institution, and the other of Humane Invention, and therefore sinful, by reason of a sign, (*the Cross*) that had a spiritual signification.

Not taking notice that the Church of *England* makes use of the *Cross* only with respect to men, that they may testifie of its reception into the visible Church.

But being unwilling to dispute that point longer, I told him that such who made that a sin, which Christ had commanded himself, might with greater reason make that a sin which the Magistrate commanded, and that was saying the *Lords Prayer*.

*The Lords Prayer* being a form composed by Jesus Christ himself, and by him commanded to be said, (*when ye pray, say our Father, &c.*) and there being no command in the whole Bible to repeal the same, it remains firm and stedfast; and ought to be not only imitated, but said with all the rest of our Prayers, which to refuse, as the *Independants* did, was disobedience to Christ, as well as those in Authority over us; for they are but the Stewards of God, to see his will performed, as



well respecting the Worship of God as any other concern; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.

This by many feeble Arguments he endeavour'd to represent as no Duty, nor Command of Christ, wresting Scripture in a very high degree, (in my apprehension) to vindicate himself.

And this brings into my mind what I heard him say some time before, when discoursing with him about *set forms of Prayer*; and particularly, *the Lords Prayer*; He said, *should they yield the Lords Prayer to be used as a set form, it would justify the use of all Liturgies.*

As much as to say, if it be a Duty to say the *Lords Prayer*, which is a *set form*, then all other *set forms are lawful*, And being appointed by Authority, ought to be used.

Having debated a long time about *the Lords Prayer*, and business calling us both away: To end the controverſie, I told him that each party had much to say for themselves, which I was not able to gainsay, and desired to hear the controverſie duely debated between good, and able men on both sides; being in hopes thereby to gain satisfaction to my own self.

He askt me if I knew any one that would be willing to undertake the work against him.

I demanded of him again if he would be willing to discourse with Dr. *Stillingsfleet*, if I could procure him.

He seem'd very unwilling of that, neither did we come to any resolution at all, about that proposition, but rather concluded that the controverſie should be managed by writing. I steadfastly declared my resolution of embracing the truth,

truth on which side soever it were; and having received some Ghostly advice from him, we parted.

Yet what he had said, made me a little troubled in mind, fearing lest I should be out of my duty, by breaking Covenant with those to whom I was so nearly related in the bonds of the Gospel, which made me (when I came home) very uneasy till I had been at the *Throne of Grace*, to beg counsel at the hands of God.

When I had done, I consulted the Scriptures, and compared what he told me unto them, which I conceived to be very repugnant to what he said, and was thence induced to write unto him this following Letter.

S I R,

‘**L**ast Friday I gave you to understand in some measure, (though very imperfectly,) the reasons wherefore I have absented my self from your meeting, which I have here set down in writing, to prevent mistake.

‘And the general reason thereof is, *The strong apprehensions I have of sinning by so doing*; which if I can make appear, by plain Scriptural Arguments, it will justifie me in what I have done, otherwise I must confess I lye under great guilt, for the omission of my duty.

‘Once I did dread going to Church, lest I should be out of my duty; and now for the same reason I even dread going to a Meeting.

‘For then I had my Conversation (as I may say) wholly among them that are Enemies to the

Church, which speak the worst they can of  
 her; and I being but too credulous, had an  
 aversion, (though I believe, not so great as  
 some) to those of her Communion, judging them  
 Antichristian: But now Blessed be God, I have  
 less malice and conceitedness, and for the Church,  
 more Charity and Obedience; for I believe she  
 is as pure a Church as any Christ hath this day  
 in the World; *holding fast the form of sound  
 words in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.*  
 2 Tim. 1. 13.

And I account it a marvellous instance of Di-  
 vine goodness, that God was pleased to discover  
 to me my sins by such remarkable Providen-  
 ces: As,

First, By making me to consider the Nature  
 of the *Oath* I took, when I was made free, which  
 is customary to be taken by all persons of every  
 perswasion; and I never heard you, nor any  
 other speak against it, for it is but according to  
 reason, and all the Religion in the World, ex-  
 cept it be those that account it no sin, to speak  
 evil of Dignities, and make Parties and Divi-  
 sions both in the Church, and in the State.

After I had read, and considered the same,  
 with what I heard from your mouth concerning  
 the breach of *promissory Oaths*, I was deeply con-  
 vinced that I had sinned against God, and had  
 strange fears darted into my mind, of my being  
 seduced from my Allegiance to my Prince, by  
 frequenting of unlawful Conventicles, and know-  
 ing private gatherings of Dissensious persons  
 against the peace of his Majesties Subjects, which  
 by degrees created in me a desire to acquaint my  
 self, with some sober and religious Protestants,  
 that

‘that I might hear what was to be said on both  
‘sides, whom I did oppose with all the Arguments  
‘I could draw both from Scripture and reason ;  
‘by whose grave and judicious answers, I was  
‘more and more confirmed in my opinion of the  
‘truth of my former suggestions, one of them  
‘going to *Shoreditch-Church*, to hear the Bishop  
‘of *London* preach, I offered to accompany him,  
‘which was accepted, (for I had a great mind to  
‘hear the Bishop preach,) and being to confirm  
‘afterwards, took occasion in his Sermon to shew  
‘the benefit as well as the necessity of Confirmati-  
‘on : After Sermon was ended, I stood to see such  
‘confirm’d, who were most of them known to  
‘the Doctor of the place, and the Bishop very  
‘reverently lay’d his hand upon them, and ble-  
‘ssed them one after another.

‘I also stood among them before the Bishop,  
‘and approving of the thing, desired him to  
‘confirm me also ; whereupon the grave Bishop  
‘lay’d his hand upon my head, as I kneeled before  
‘him, and with eyes lifted up to Heaven, ear-  
‘nestly prayed thus,

‘*Defend O Lord, this thy Servant with thy Hea-  
‘venly Grace, that he may continue thine for ever, and  
‘daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more,  
‘until he come to thine Eternal Kingdom, Amen.*

‘I prayed heartily with them, and the whole  
‘Congregation for these Blessings ; and I stedfast-  
‘ly believe, that God hath heard the same in  
‘mercy ; for he did then shewr down much of  
‘his Holy Spirit ; and after I was departed thence,  
‘and was alone, I had as great enlargements of  
‘Communion with God, and was in as lively ex-



ercise of Grace as ever I was in any Ordinance in my life.

After which I apprehended greater loveliness in that way, and took great delight in the methods of her Worship and Service; and in process of time came acquainted with a religious and experienced Christian of that persuasion, (Daughter to a Minister of great Learning and Piety) whom I desired in marriage, to the end I might gain the greater advantage of finding out the truth between both parties, which I will cleave unto by the help of God.

By my Wifes Father after Marriage, I was also abundantly fortified in my present Judgment, and by him absolutely convinced of sin, if I should unite my self to such unlawful Assemblies, (as he termed them,) which I found my self guilty of, though I took no notice of it to him all the while I was in the Country.

And being convinced that I sin against God by an unlawful joyning, and making my self of a party with those who make a disturbance and division in the Church of God, out of a pretence of more purity; doing evil, that good may come of it: I think verily, I am bound in Conscience to serve God according to the way of the Church of *England*, as it is by Law established; which I apprehend that I, and every honest man may do without sin, but not so, the other way for these reasons.

First, Because Obedience is better than Sacrifice; Disobedience, and Rebellion, are as the sin of Witchcraft, and stubbornness is as Iniquity, and Idolatry.

‘ All Obedience is comprehended under these two, viz. our Obedience unto God, and our Obedience unto Man; and indeed our Obedience unto Man is but our Obedience to God himself.

‘ Now that which we ought to know, is what men we ought to obey; and how far, and in what things they are to be obeyed.

‘ The Men we are commanded to honour, and obey, and be subject unto, are all our Superiours, especially such as are above us in Church, and State.

‘ Be subject to every Ordinance of Man for the Lords sake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or other inferior Magistrates and Ministers; and we must needs be subject not only for wrath, but for conscience sake; for God hath ordained such persons to be, and he that resisteth the Ordinance of God, shall receive to himself Damnation; all which is abundantly evident from 1 Pet. 2. 12, 13. Titus 3. 1, 2. Rom. 13. all the beginning of the Chapter.

‘ But the great question is, how far, and in what things they are to be obeyed?

‘ It is true we must obey them in the Lord, and if they command us any thing which God hath forbidden; then must come in that of the Apostle, Whether it be better to obey God, or Man, judge ye?

‘ A power they have from God to command, for the decent regulating, and ordering of Affairs, as well in the Church, as in the State: Let all things be done decently, and in order.

‘ This Power you claim in your Assemblies, and account it great Disobedience in any Member to  
‘ con-

‘contradict your commands, which tend to the  
 ‘well-ordering and governing of them : And  
 ‘may not the King, and others in Authority,  
 ‘who have the rule over us, be obeyed as well as  
 ‘you.

‘There is no Church in the World, (yours not  
 ‘excepted,) but doth practice things never com-  
 ‘manded in the word of God.

‘God hath not determined every thing that is  
 ‘to be done in matters of Religion, but hath left  
 ‘many things to the discretion of them he hath  
 ‘set over us ; and it is a Soul-damning sin to  
 ‘live in contempt of their Authority.

‘There is nothing in the Church of *England*,  
 ‘but what tends greatly to the promoting of  
 ‘Holiness, and advancing the Glory of the Lord,  
 ‘by bringing into our thoughts much matter for  
 ‘holy Contemplation.

‘God requires the *heart principally* in all our  
 ‘Services, yet notwithstanding he commands us  
 ‘to glorifie him with our bodies also : Wherefore  
 ‘Kneeling at the Lords Supper (though you say it  
 ‘is but Image worship) is a most *beseeching gesture*,  
 ‘for Creatures to use when they have so nearly  
 ‘to do with their Lord Creator, and can be no  
 ‘more Image-worship, than sitting or any other  
 ‘gesture, but by many nice logical Arguments,  
 ‘you would make that sin which is no sin, to justi-  
 ‘fie your dividing the Church of Christ ; and  
 ‘that which is sin, when it serves for your pur-  
 ‘pose you make no sin.

‘I greatly wonder that sitting at the Lords  
 ‘Supper, which is no more commanded by Christ  
 ‘than kneeling, should be cried up by you, as a  
 ‘duty absolutely necessary to a right receiving ;

‘And

‘And yet the Lords Prayer which is commanded  
‘by Christ to be prayed, should be so much cried  
‘down, as not fit for this more full dispensation  
‘of the Gospel.

‘If you are got so high above the Lords Prayer,  
‘as to think it none of your Duty to say it;  
‘it will be no marvel if at length, you get above  
‘all other Ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christs  
‘appointment.

‘Tis not all the Logick and Rhetorick in the  
‘World, that can dissuade me from that which  
‘is so plainly commanded, and make me partial  
‘in my Obedience. Though you may blind the  
‘eyes of others, yet I hope by the distinguishing  
‘Grace of God, you shall never be able to blind  
‘mine.

‘It is not any prejudice against you, or any  
‘member of yours, that enclines me to separate  
‘from you; but love to God, and to my own  
‘Soul, by apprehending my Sin, and my danger  
‘while I continue with you.

‘A Universal Obedience, (which is the only  
‘true Obedience of the Gospel) is that which I  
‘labour after, and I find I can never attain it, in  
‘any separate Church this day in *England*: and  
‘this I am sure is reason enough to justify me in  
‘what I have done.

‘*Disobedience, is as the sin of Witchcraft, and*  
‘creates all differences, debates, strifes, envyings  
‘and evil speaking, one of another; which, how  
‘contrary to the Gospel of Christ, Judge ye?  
‘Stubbornness and obstinacy, in such wayes of  
‘Disobedience, is great iniquity, and Idolatry,  
‘and doubtless will bring down great Judgments  
‘if not timely repented of and forsaken.

‘And



‘And being convinc’d of all these sins by holding communion with you, what doth it call for but deep Humiliation? The Lord humble, and pardon me, in what I have done amiss in this matter, and grant me his special grace, that for the future, I may live to his Glory, and lead a holy and conscientious Life, in the way of the Church of England, to the end of my dayes,  
 Amen.

These are the reasons for which I desire to be dismissed in peace; If you can offer any more weighty, and send them to me in writing, I shall thank fully receive them, and do accordingly so far, as God, and my conscience will give leave.

I beg your Prayers, (though I cannot sit down amongst you with comfort, and peace) that I may not lye under any temptation; for hitherto I have declared only what hath lain with weight upon my Spirit.

I had come my self to wait upon you, but I knew it would not be to us much purpose as this present writing; and now I live in hope to hear from you, who am,

Date Feb.

Your loving Friend,

22, 1681

J. Jones.

At the delivery of this Letter, I discovered my resolution of departing to some of the brethren (unless I could receive satisfaction to those doubts and scruples I lay under) which occasioned strong debates twixt me and them: to whom I read it; desiring them to deliver it Mr. Lobb.

For which Letter’s sake, I was censured extremely, and represented to many of the Brethren and others, as an Apostate from the Truth, and

and a very malicious, censorious Person, whose Hypocrisie was now made manifest.

The chiefest instrument in this work, (who confessed he knew not what was in the Letter, but by hear-say) within a few dayes after the delivery of it came to my house, to know the reasons of my departing from them, and of writing such a censorious Letter.

As for my departing, I told him, it was for Conscience sake, least I should be found guilty of resisting the Higher Powers, which sin God hath threatned with Damnation, *Rom. 13. 3.*

But as for writing a censorious Letter, I deny'd my having censured any one of them.

I only accused and condemned my self therein for those faults which I really thought my self guilty of, and if their Consciences did accuse them of the same faults they must not blame me for writing, but themselves for doing amiss.

He was very free in reproaching the Church, and me for adhering to it; ingenuously acknowledging, that in a Publique Meeting, where they held Conference together, I was the subject of their discourse: wherein they did unanimously declare that I was in a most wretched estate and condition; for departing from the true Worship of God.

I laboured to convince him to the contrary, and told him I had a great deal of peace and comfort in what I had done, and did resolve (by the Grace of God) to go on as I had begun, and thereby fulfil the will of God, plainly appearing in his Holy Word.

Yet all this while I was troubled to think, that I was brought upon the publique Stage, and become

become a Town-talk, through the indecent clamours of censorious Persons, who quickly spread it abroad, not only throughout the Congregation, but among others also, whereby it was carried to my dearest Relations, to whom I was represented as a most wicked, abusive Creature, fall'n from whatever was good.

Before whom I durst not appear till I had contrived a way to take off that aspersion, which occasioned their displeasure against me : But this only by the way the full account of it, is reserved for its proper place.

Some considerable time after this, I went again to Mr. Lobb, being still willing to hear all that could be alledged against me for leaving them to hold Communion with the Church of England.

And he lay'd down this for an assertion, *That every Believer is invested with a Power of choosing his own Pastor* ; and he did not question, when he had proved it from Scriptural Arguments, (since I was willing to imbrace Truth,) but that I should be convinc't of the evil of what I had done.

Though at that time, either he could not, or would not undertake the work.

He did moreover greatly blame me for censoriousness in writing the last Letter ; and said, That the relational Duties incumbent on him as a Pastor, did induce him to do all he could for my good.

He also demanded the reason why I forsook them, and what fault I found, which induced me to break that solemn Covenant I had engaged in, to live together with them according to the Order of the Gospel.

Saying that I must accuse them justly of imposing something upon me, not warranted from the Word of God, before I could with a safe conscience separate from them.

I gave him clearly to understand that the sole reason of my separating, was, because I could not abide in their Communion without being guilty of, and living in a wilful, and known sin of disobeying the Higher Powers in things that were lawful, and no way contrary to the Word of God, and consequently not sinful: The Word of God being the Rule for Sin, as well as Duty.

I told him it was as much Superstition to make *that sin, and hurtful to mans Salvation, that God made not so in his Word, by forbidding it*; as it was to make *that Duty, and of necessity to Salvation, which he had not expressly commanded.*

The Ceremonies of the Church are in themselves *indifferent*, and may be used without sin, or let alone; but being appointed by the *Magistrate*, it becomes as much *Duty* to obey them, as our Parents in any thing which they command us.

But Mr. Lobb still affirmed, *That a Believer ought to choose his own Pastor, notwithstanding the Magistrate forbid him, and that when this choice was freely and voluntarily made, no command of the Magistrate could make it void.*

This he promised to make out in writing to satisfy me, and others of the Church of *England*, that did oppose the same, which made me long till it were done, supposing I should receive Arguments that were invincible: But it appeared otherwise, notwithstanding the unreasonable deal of time he took up to do the same.

More-



Moreover I took great care to visit the most eminent of the Congregation to assure them, that though I had chang'd my Opinion, yet I would never alter in Love and Affection to them, as Christians, with whom I had many sharp disputations, being able to vindicate the Church of England, and justify my self against whatsoever they could alledge.

About the same time one lent me a Book, call'd *The Harmony between the Ancient and Modern Non-conformists*, which gives the reasons why they separate from the Establish'd Religion, which I believe are convincing to many sincere Christians amongst them; who (crediting all that their Teachers say, without thoroughly examining the matter) are deceived.

In giving my Judgment and Sence of those Reasons, I writ in the Margent of the Book, enough to convince any moderate Man of the great insufficiency of those pleas to justify Separation.

Another of them lent me a Book, call'd the *Counterplot for Union*; wherein he did not question but I would find unanswerable Arguments for Separation, the greatest part of which Book was made by Mr. Lobb.

In the Preface he endeavours to represent the Bishops as the Kings greatest Enemies, which looks like a design of setting them at variance, and breeding contention in the Civil State.

In the first page of the Book, he represents the Dean of St. Pauls, as the Author of a design to bring in Popery.

In speaking of the Promoters of the said Design, together with the Author it self, he expresses himself thus.

‘That

‘ That the Author of the *Defence of the Dean*,  
 ‘ with some others, did vehemently carry on the  
 ‘ Design, which was seemingly but begun by Dr.  
 ‘ *Stillingfleet*.

And in the middle of the Book he labours to  
 represent the Church of *England* Schismatical,  
 and the Governours thereof Schismatics.

But his insinuations would not take place, and  
 when I discovered my apprehensions of the Book  
 to my friend that lent it me, I did it in this man-  
 ner.

‘ I know your apprehensions to understand my ten-  
 ‘ times of it, and to tell you the real truth,  
 ‘ (according to my apprehension) I think Mr.  
 ‘ A has performed his part (as well as the  
 ‘ rest) most ingeniously.

‘ Especially I approve of the proposals that are  
 ‘ made for Union, and particularly my heart  
 ‘ that God would incline our superiors to make  
 ‘ such overtures for peace, that would be grateful  
 ‘ to Dissenters, and I doubt not, but that there  
 ‘ are many among them, forward enough to pro-  
 ‘ mote such a design.

‘ I have great reason, (more than common  
 ‘ Charity) to believe, that many among Dis-  
 ‘ senters belong to Christ; and I have the same rea-  
 ‘ son to believe, that many of the Church

‘ of England, believe the many Societies of young  
 ‘ men in the City, that forsake not the Alliance  
 ‘ that the Church and Dissenters have together, to provoke unto love  
 ‘ and good works, who conscientiously pro-  
 ‘ mote such things that are appointed by the  
 ‘ Church.

‘ I have great reason, (more than common  
 ‘ Charity) to believe, that many among Dis-  
 ‘ senters belong to Christ; and I have the same rea-  
 ‘ son to believe, that many of the Church

‘ of England, believe the many Societies of young  
 ‘ men in the City, that forsake not the Alliance  
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 ‘ men in the City, that forsake not the Alliance  
 ‘ that the Church and Dissenters have together, to provoke unto love  
 ‘ and good works, who conscientiously pro-  
 ‘ mote such things that are appointed by the  
 ‘ Church.

‘ I have great reason, (more than common  
 ‘ Charity) to believe, that many among Dis-  
 ‘ senters belong to Christ; and I have the same rea-  
 ‘ son to believe, that many of the Church

A Letter to one of Mr. Lobb's Church.

Dear Friend,

I have read your Book throughout, and had brought it home to this, but that I have a Friend of very great Judgment and Piety, whom I am desirous should peruse it, if it may be permitted. I will keep it my self till Saturday, and if I hear nothing from you to the contrary, in that time I will then presume to lend it.

I know you are desirous to understand my sentiments of it, and to tell you the real truth, (according to my apprehension) I think Mr. Lobb hath performed his part, (as well as the rest) most Ingeniously.

Especially I approve of the proposals that are made for Union, and beg with all my heart that God would encline our Superiours, to make such overtures for peace, that would be grateful to Dissenters, and I doubt not, but that there are many among them, forward enough to promote such a design.

I have great reason, (more than common Charity) to believe, that many among Dissenters belong to Christ; and I have the same reason to conclude as much of many of the Church of England, besides the many Societies of young men in this City, that forsake not the Assembling themselves together, to provoke unto love and good works; who conscientiously practicing such things that are appointed by the Church,

Church, do glorify God abundantly, and comfort, and edifie one another.

As for my part, (whatever you, or the rest of my Brethren may judge of me) God knows the uprightness of my heart; that for no other reason, than for that of Conscience, I have left your Communion, being thoroughly convinced, that I cannot continue amongst you without sin.

I am very sensible where the stress of the controversy lies, between one party, and the other: Some are under strong Convictions that the terms of Communion imposed are sinful terms; wherefore they can't comply with them: Others think they are not so, for where there is no law prohibiting, there is no Transgression: (which Mr. Lobb observes in Page 79, to be Jesuitical Doctrine, but it must not be esteemed false, because they hold it any more than the Doctrine of the Trinity.)

Further they add, That whether the Terms imposed be sinful, or not in themselves, yet to those that esteem them as such, they are sinful; And this is the reason they can't comply with them.

I am perswaded you believe in your heart, that the Cross after Baptisme, and kneeling at the Lords Supper is sinful, (which are the Terms of Communion with the Church of England) therefore you cannot conform, unless you do that which you believe to be sinful; this I know is made a great reason for Separation.

But suppose you were under some doubts and scruples, whether those Terms were sinful, or no; (for I believe you will grant it is your duty to conform, if you could do it without sin)



‘To obey our Superiours, you know is a Duty, the other you are not certain whether it be Sin, or no.

‘I demand therefore, whether you ought to neglect a known Duty, to avoid that which you fear is sin, but possibly may prove otherwise: A scrupled and uncertain sin, ought not to stand in competition with a known Duty.

‘This is my case; once I was afraid that kneeling at the Lords Supper, and the Cross were sin, because I supposed them to be parts of the Worship of God; but they being nothing so, I am satisfied they are no sinful Terms of Communion, and by your own Opinion I ought to conform: It is the Will of God I should conform; and if I will be faithful to the Covenant I made at my first joyning with you, I must conform; for the Gospel rule, (which I promised then to keep close unto) will not admit of Disobedience to the least Commandement.

‘In the Church of England the Word of God is truly Preached, and the Sacraments are rightly Administred.

‘I am commanded by my Superiours to conform, and I find after diligent search, and importunate request to God, I can do it with a clear Conscience; the Terms that are imposed, as the conditions are not sinful, but such as are adapted, and fitted for decency, and the better disposing the mind for the service of God.

‘I love Mr. Lobb, and all of his Society, as I hope they belong to God; yet I love not every thing practiced by them, viz. Their exposing the Church of England to reproach, and contempt: This is a great sin you are guilty of, and

and can't deny it, when you speak truth; and I believe this is the reason why God doth prolong the calamities which the Dissenters labour under; for if they did only pray earnestly to God, waiting with Humility; it would hasten their deliverance from all the pressures they lye under; but since they are so passionate against their Brethren, and so impatient in themselves, it is but just with God, to continue his chastizements upon them.

Never seek to justify and clear your selves of this charge, for it doth appear abundantly to be true by the overt acts of it.

First, In the Pastors, among whom I may rank Mr. *Lobb* in the front.

Secondly, The peoples spitting their venom against the Church, discovers the same, who are guilty, some more, and some less.

What reproach and contempt do the Pastors cast upon the Church? by representing her to be a great Enemy to Christ, and his true Religion, but a friend to Antichrist, and the Religion of the Pope.

That the Church of *England* is thus exposed to contempt by the Pastors, and particularly, by Mr. *Lobb*; see the *Modest Inquiry*, where the good and pious Dr. *Stillingsfleet*, (that perfect Enemy to Popery) is impeacht of doing what advances Popery; and in the very first page of the *Counterplot*, he makes him the Author of a design to bring in the Pope, which how true, God knows, and how unlikely Mr. *Lobb* himself knows; however, he was pleased thus to judge, and write.

‘And he doth not expose the Doctor singly,  
 ‘but the whole Church to great contempt; by tak-  
 ‘ing advantage of some notions of the Author of  
 ‘the *Defence*; which he saith are contrary to the  
 ‘Protestant Doctrine, contained in the Thirty  
 ‘Nine Articles; and then triumphing in his Con-  
 ‘quest over the Church, calls her Schismatical,  
 ‘and the Governours thereof Schismatics; and  
 ‘all this he hath most cunningly cast about, to re-  
 ‘present the Church odious, yet to put it off from  
 ‘himself, as plainly appears by comparing page  
 ‘the 80, 81, 82. with page 83.

‘Though Mr. *Lobb* doth diligently enquire in-  
 ‘to the nature and tendency of the sins of his Ad-  
 ‘versaries, yet I am afraid he never seriously con-  
 ‘sidered the evil of this.

‘These are things that perpetuate the Divi-  
 ‘sions of the Church, and God will visit for them,  
 ‘and withhold the desired mercy, till they are  
 ‘better disposed to receive it.

‘Till these janglings are lay’d by, and the Dis-  
 ‘senters have a better Opinion of the Confor-  
 ‘mists, and they of the Dissenters, (which these  
 ‘things lead not unto.) I am afraid we shall have  
 ‘no union, till there is greater peace in the Pul-  
 ‘pit, and in the Press, and in the Communica-  
 ‘tions of Christians; there can be little Union  
 ‘expected.

‘When suffering persons are most active, and  
 ‘bustle to deliver themselves, and to vindicate  
 ‘their own cause; God stands off, lets them a-  
 ‘lone, that they may see how weak the Arm of  
 ‘Flesh is, yet laying aside their own Devices,  
 ‘and carnal Reasonings, humbly looking to God  
 ‘alone for Deliverance: He will arise, and  
 ‘make

'make his strength appear in their weakness, for  
'in the Mount the Lord is seen.

'These things Mr. *Lobb* hath preached to o-  
'thers, and it were well, if some others would  
'preach the same to him again: This is but a  
'hint of much that might be said,

'Think not that I do hereby rail at Mr. *Lobb*,  
'or any other Dissenters; I only desire every one  
'to search after their own sins, and be sensible of  
'the evil thereof, as God grant I may be of mine.

'I will enlarge no further, only beg of God to  
'give us all a right understanding in all things;  
'and so remain

May the 10th. Your Loving Friend,

1682. *J. Jones.*

After I had sent this Letter to my Friend, and  
saw that no Answer would be returned, I went to  
see Mr. *Lobb* again, to desire him not to forget  
what he had promised, (to produce good Argu-  
ments from Scripture to prove, That every Be-  
liever was invested with a power from Christ to chast-  
his own Pastor,) which nevertheless he neglected;  
and I being impatient, writ to him this following  
Letter.



## Part of another Letter to Mr. Lobb.

Kind Sir,

I Hope you will be pleased to take this in good part, which is but to put you in remembrance of the promise which you made me, when I was with you last.

As to matter of Fact, for which I am accused of my Brethren, I'll say not much, but let the righteous God the Judge of all, and the Discerner of all Hearts, judge between me, and them, to whom I can appeal with comfort and rejoycing, that he knows the integrity of my Heart in this matter; that a great fence of Duty engageth me to cleave unto the Church of England, and fear of sinning against him, in these following particulars.

First, *God hath commanded Obedience to Magistrates in lawful things, and it is sin to Disobey.*

The Magistrate requireth nothing, but what I believe in my Conscience is lawful and good.

Therefore it is sin in me to disobey the Magistrate, who requireth a Conformity to the Government which is established by Law.

When I conceive good and wholsome Laws are made, (by which I ought to be governed, and I should set light by them, continuing to do what is contrary thereunto,) that do no way interfere with the Laws of God; may I not then be said to despise Government? Yet surely.

And

‘ And this is my case, A sin it is which God hates, and hath threatned ; therefore I ought to separate, rather than sin, which is according to your own principle.

Secondly, God hates Divisions among Christians ; and those especially that continue or increase them in word, or deed. And as to my own particular, I conceive, that while I continue a Member of a Church that is not conformable to the Government which God hath set over us ; I do all that time, by my example, and practise help to continue the Divisions.

‘ For which reason I had rather be of St. *Paul’s* mind, to become all things to all men ; so far as I may without sin, rather than contribute any thing to Christian Divisions, by insisting on every punctilio, which I, and perhaps some few more) may not think convenient.

‘ God commands to mark those that cause Divisions ; and really I have impartially considered the rules to find out the faulty Divider, and the Schismatick : And pray don’t say that I am censorious, if I do think verily that they do return upon your own Head accidentally.

‘ The Lord grant that you, and I may sincerely study Peace, Union, and Conformity ; so far as we may do it without sin : This is, and shall be my practice ; and if it seem evil to you, do what you please, and so will I.

Thirdly, ‘ I cant continue, while I am of your Communion without sin ; because I shall break all the Vows and Promises I made to God, and my Brethren, of endeavouring to avoid every known Sin, and to perform every known Duty ; and of walking according to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in all things.

‘ There

There is nothing in the Church of *England*, that any way obstructs the great design of the Gospel, which is strict Holiness manifested in an Universal Obedience to all the Commands of God.

I long to hear how you can make out that which you promised, which if you cannot do with great clearness of reason; your blaming me for what I have done, will be most unreasonable.

For when I do really approve of a thing, and find it lawful, and am obliged to the practice of it, by those whom God hath ordained: What strange wickedness would it be in me to resist the Ordinance of God? And how justly should I deserve Damnation.

Howbeit, since a plain commanded Duty is here neglected, and I have engaged by Covenant to perform it; I will pay my vows unto the Lord, and that in the presence of all his Saints.

And whatever some may think of me, God is my Judge, and the lifter up of my head.

I will enlarge no further at this time, but once more desire you will not forget me, who am

June the 17th.  
1682.

Your Loving Friend,  
J. Jones.

In a short time after this, he did draw up his Arguments, which are as followeth.

Mr.

*Mr. Lobb's Arguments.*

**V**Hether according to the Scriptures,  
every Believer is invested with a right  
of choosing his own Pastor?

For the clearer understanding the import of  
this question, it must be premised.

First, 'That an Answer to this Query is desired  
for the satisfaction of one, who being a Mem-  
ber of the visible Catholick Church, did contra-  
ry to the Command of the Magistrate make  
choice of a Pastor; whence the Inquiry is, whe-  
ther in so doing he did but exercise that right,  
with which God hath invested him, and of  
which no Humane Authority can justly deprive  
him.

Secondly, 'That this right of choosing his  
own Pastor, is not meant an ordaining him to  
that Office, but the choosing one who is sup-  
pos'd to be according to the Rule of the Gos-  
pel, competently qualified for, and to be, if  
not already actually ordained unto the Office of  
a Pastor.

'Neither doth this right of choosing interfere  
with the Magistrates, or Patrons right of dis-  
posing their Tythes and Temples; for though  
this their own choice of a Minister for them-  
selves must be considered in contradistinction  
to the choice of Magistrates or Patrons for  
them, yet not in contradistinction to the Magi-  
strates disposal of Tythes.

'Tis acknowledged that the people have no  
right to dispose of that which is the property  
of



‘of another, and that therefore those Tithes and  
 ‘Temples which belong to the Magistrate and  
 ‘Patron, are not to be obtained for the incou-  
 ‘ragement of the Ministers, cholen by the peo-  
 ‘ple any otherwise, then as it shall please the  
 ‘Magistrate or Patron to bestow them.

Thirdly, ‘That the Right or Liberty the peo-  
 ‘ple have to choose for themselves, is esteemed  
 ‘Divine, and not meerly Humane.

‘That the people sometime had a right of choo-  
 ‘sing their own Ministers, even in the Primitive  
 ‘Times, cannot but be acknowledged by all,  
 ‘whether Church of *England* Divines, or *Papists*.

‘*Whitgift* himself, who so much opposes the  
 ‘peoples right, do’s confess, That from the  
 ‘Apostles days, untill *Cyprians* time, and after;  
 ‘the peoples consent was required in the appoint-  
 ‘ing of Ministers.

‘And *Bellarmino*, who expresses himself very  
 ‘full on this point, do’s grant, That sometimes  
 ‘the people had a right to choose their own Pa-  
 ‘stor.

‘But the great Query is, Whether this Right  
 ‘be Divine, or Humane; unto which *Bellarmino*,  
 ‘in opposing the Protestants, such as *Luther*,  
 ‘*M. Illiricus*, *Brentius*, *Chemnitius*, and the Prote-  
 ‘stants in *France* and *Holland* do’s assert, That  
 ‘the Right the people sometimes had to choose  
 ‘their own Minister, was not Divine, but by  
 ‘connivance, or concession of the Popes: So  
 ‘*Bellarmino* de Clericis, lib. 1. c. 7. *Ius eligendi*  
 ‘*summum pontificem ceterosq; Ecclesia Pastores &*  
 ‘*Ministros, non convenit populo Jure Divino, sed si-*  
 ‘*quid aliquando in hac re populus potuit, id totum ha-*  
 ‘*buit, ex Conniventia, vel Concessione Pontificum.* (i. e.)

‘The

“The right of choosing the Pope, or any other  
“Pastors or Ministers of the Church, doth not  
“belong to the people (*jure divino*) but if at any  
“time the people had any concern in the choo-  
“sing Ministers, it was either by the connivance  
“or grants of the Popes, it was of Humane right  
“only.

“To the same purpose. *Whitgift* in his Defence  
“of the Answer. p. 164, &c. argues, Who tho’  
“he grants that even in the Apostles days, (as  
“has been already observed) this kind of Electing  
“Ministers by the People, was, yea, and is very  
“profitable, and expedient too; yet it was not  
“of Divine Right, but alterable as time and oc-  
“casion serveth.

“This premised concerning the true state of  
“the Question, I answer in the Affirmative,  
“Namely, That every Christian, according to  
“the Word of God is invested with a Right of  
“choosing his own Pastor, (i. e.) The Right the  
“People have, is of God; and consequently not  
“alterable by any Humane Power or Authority  
“whatsoever. Though antecedent to a peoples  
“making their choice the Counsel or Advice of a  
“Magistrate or Patron may be of use in their  
“making it, yet the Command of a Magistrate  
“can’t justly deprive the people of such a Right,  
“nor nullifie their choice, when once made of  
“one who is competently qualified according to  
“the Rule of God’s Word.

“For the proof of this, I need not address my  
“self to any, but those great Reformers, who in  
“oppugning the Papists, have furnished us with  
“many an Argument, as well as with sufficient  
“replies to all those feeble Objections which  
“have

‘have been urg’d by the Papists against the peoples Right.

‘For ’tis evident enough to the Learned, that as this has been of old, a Controversie between Papists and Protestants, even so those of the Church of *England*, who have opposed the Peoples Right, have fetcht all their Arguments out of the Papists Store-House; and it must be also acknowledged, that the Nonconformists can offer but little in the defence of the Peoples Right, but what they find in the Writings of the great Reformers.

‘But before I proceed to the confirmation of what I assert, ’tis expedient that I beseech the Reader to consider, That if the Peoples Right be fully proved from the Scriptures, it must be acknowledged to be of God, and not alterable by any Law of Man.

‘*Argument First*, Which is taken from that Obligation every Believer is under, of endeavouring his own Edification.

‘If it be the Duty of every Believer or Christian to use those means for his own Edification, which he is fully convinc’t are most proper and suitable: He has a right to choose his own Minister.

‘This is easily evinced to any that will but impartially consider, That Ministers, even Pastors and Teachers are given to the Church for this very end, namely, the perfecting the Saints, and the edifying the Body of Christ; *Eph. 4. 8.*

‘*11, 12, &c.* They are the Instruments ordained of God for the helping on the Salvation of the Elect, and the Joy of Believers; *2 Tim. 2, 10. 2 Cor. 1. 24.* ’Tis the Ministry of the

‘Word

Word that is the great means ordained of God for our Edification, and the more suitable a mans Ministry is to this or the other Christian, the more edifying it will be unto him, (i. e.) the more suitable means it will be for his Edification.

It must be duly noted, that there are variety of capacities among Christian people, and answerable thereunto a variety of gifts among Ministers; every gift, and every Minister with his gifts being very useful for that work for which the gifts are adjusted: 1 Cor. 12. But on the account of the various capacities of the people, and the different gifts of Ministers, the Ministry of every individual Pastor that is competently enough qualified, for that work is not a suitable means for the Edification of all sorts of Hearers: The gift of the Minister must be suited to the capacity of the Hearer, or otherwise the gift will not edify that Hearer. This being so, it does necessarily follow, that as the Ministry is the great mean appointed of God for the Edification of the people, even so the Ministry of that man who is mostly suited to the capacity of this particular Christian, is most profitable, and edifying unto him: And therefore if it be the Duty of every Christian to use those means for their Edification, which they are convinced are most suitable: 'Tis their Duty to choose their own Minister, for a suitable Ministry is an edifying means, yea, and the more suitable a mans Ministry is to my capacity the more proper and suitable means it will be for my Edification, and such as must be chosen; 'tis Duty, and if Duty, surely seeing every



every man has a right to discharge his Duty: Every Christian has so much a right to choose his own Pastor, that no Command of any Magistrate whatsoever can justly deprive him of it.

But 'tis the Duty of every Christian to use those means for his own Edification, which he is fully convinc'd are most proper and suitable.

That this is so, is fully confirm'd by a multitude of Scriptural considerations.

All those Scriptures which make it the Duty of Believers to endeavour the perfecting the Salvation of their Souls, do sufficiently evince it Duty to use all those means that are most proper, and best suited for Edification: 'Tis the Duty of every Christian to use not only means, but the most proper means for the Salvation of his own Soul, of which no Magistrate or Patron can be; the man himself only is the most competent Judge: For God has made us rational Creatures, has given us understanding faculties, and expects we should make use of them. We are not to proceed blindly in matters of Religion, wherein God's Glory, and the Salvation of the Soul is concerned; but must consider that we do act like men discreetly. Consider, (1. o.) weigh well what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things, says the Apostle 2 Tim. 2. 6. again, 1 Cor. 10. 15. I speak unto wise men, judge ye what I say, which is sufficient to demonstrate, that it is the Duty of every Believer in the using means for his own Edification, to exercise his Judgment in discerning between thing and thing, between one mean, and another, and to do what he is convinc'd is most proper, and advantageous to his Soul: The man  
in

'in this case must act for himself, and must be accountable unto God for what he himself hath done.

\* As a Magistrates Command will not be a sufficient plea at the last day for my neglect of the most proper means, neither will it now excuse my Omission. I must choose for my self, tho' the Magistrate forbids.

\* *Argument the Second.* If it be the Duty of every particular Christian to try the Prophets or Pastors, and abide by the true, and avoid the false; he has a right to choose his own Pastor, tho' the Magistrate forbids. This is obvious to a common capacity.

\* But it is the Duty of every particular Christian, to try the Prophets, and abide by the true, and avoid the false, though the Magistrate forbids. The confirmation of this I'll give from the Scripture, as *Bilson* Bishop of *Winchester* has it.

\* We have the Word and Warrant of the Holy Ghost for that which we say: *Believe not every Spirit* (says *Bilson*) *but try the Spirits, whether they be of God, for many false Prophets are gone out into the World.* 1 John 4. 1. Prophets be Teachers, and if Teachers, they must be tryed before they be trusted, then Pastours must be discerned before they be believed; and by whom trow you, but by them that should believe them: that is, by their Hearers? The same precept our Saviour gives to the multitudes that followed him, *Beware of false Prophets (or Teachers) which come to you in Sheeps-clothing, but inwardly they be ravening Wolves, by their fruits ye shall know them.* If all must beware of them, and are taught how to

‘know them, then they may lawfully try them  
 ‘before they believe them: This wisdom the  
 ‘Lord himself commendeth in his Sheep; *My*  
 ‘*Sheep, they hear my voice, and follow me, a stran-*  
 ‘*ger they will not follow, but fly from him.* John 10.  
 4, 5.

‘If you take judging for discerning, as it is of-  
 ‘ten used, the people must be Discerners and  
 ‘Judges of that which is taught: As the Pastors  
 ‘have Authority from Christ to preach the  
 ‘Truth, and woe be to them that resist the Prea-  
 ‘chers of Truth: So have all Hearers both Li-  
 ‘berty and charge to beware of Seducers given  
 ‘them by the same Lord, and woe be to them that  
 ‘do it not: *Take heed, saith our Saviour, that*  
 ‘*no man seduce you, for many shall come in my Name,*  
 ‘*saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.* &c.  
 ‘Matth. 24. Thus far Bishop Bilson.

‘He that requireth all men to receive such as he  
 ‘sendeth, charges all men to avoid such as pre-  
 ‘tend his Name, when they are not sent.

‘Thus ’tis evident, that ’tis the Duty of the  
 ‘people to try the Ministers or Preachers of  
 ‘the Word, and have a right to choose such, by  
 ‘whose Ministry they may profit most, and must  
 ‘take heed they be not deceived: This is not  
 ‘only their Liberty, their Right, but so much  
 ‘their Duty, that they sin, if they do not exer-  
 ‘cise it so far as to avoid those who are Seducers,  
 ‘wicked and ungodly, *who having but the form of*  
 ‘*Godliness, deny the power thereof.*

‘This Argument is grounded on several Texts,  
 ‘as understood by the old Reformers of the  
 ‘Church of England; whereby ’tis evident, that  
 ‘it is the Duty of every Christian to try, and  
 ‘choose

'choose for himself, and not the Magistrate to  
'choose for him.

'The Third *Argument*. That which was the  
'ordinary practice and wayes of the Church in  
'the Apostles days, must be considered to be of  
'Divine Right, and to be observed by us.

'But the peoples concern in choosing the Offi-  
'cers in the Church, was an ordinary practice in  
'the Apostles dayes, therefore of Divine Right.

'First, That that which was the ordinary pra-  
'ctice of the Church in the Apostles days, concern-  
'ing Church Affairs, must be esteemed to be of di-  
'vine right, and ought to be observed by us, is ma-  
'nifest from those Scriptural considerations, first,  
'that in 1 *Cor.* 4. 17. the Apostle doth put the Church  
'of *Corinth* in remembrance of his ways in Christ,  
'as he taught every where, in every Church: And  
'in 1 *Cor.* 11. 2. He praises the Brethren, that they  
'remembred in all things, and held fast the Or-  
'dinances as he delivered them unto the *Corinthi-*  
'*ans*. In like manner he exhorts the *Philippians*,  
'ch. 4. 9. Thus *Titus* was to observe the Orders  
'of *Paul*, *Titus* 1. 5, &c. As much as if it had been  
'said, the ordinary practice of the Apostles is a  
'rule for the directing the Churches of Christ in  
'after Ages.

'Secondly, The peoples concern in choosing  
'the Officers in the Church, was an ordinary  
'practice in the Apostles days. This evinc'd by  
'an induction of particular instances, wherein 'tis  
'plain, that what Officers soever were chosen or  
'the service of the Church, the people had some  
'concern in their choice.

When I had perused these Arguments, and  
finding them to be very weak, and slender, not



at all answering my expectation, nor what was pretended. I writ this following Letter, in answer thereunto.

*The Copy of a Third Letter sent to Mr. Lobb.*

S I R,

**I** Had waited upon you long ere this, had not extraordinary business prevented me; but neither that, nor distance of place can longer confine me from signifying to you the thoughts of my Heart. I did receive those papers which you sent me, wherein you endeavour to prove, That every Believer might choose his own Pastour, notwithstanding the Magistrates forbid him.

*I was in hopes you would have brought some positive Texts of Scripture to confirm your assertion, which you have not: the negative is plain. Obey them that have the rule over you in the Lord. Obey every Ordinance of man for the Lords sake. And since the Magistrates command nothing in matters of Religion, but what I am really convinc't may be done without sin; it is my Duty to honour and obey them; to avoid separation, as what I am convinc't is against the mind of Christ. All the Arguments you have used to prove the point, are as so many motives to induce me to cleave to the Church*

Church of England; and arguments to confirm me in the equity and justice of what I have done hitherto. I shall no longer dispute a Believers right to choose his own Pastor, since it is no longer then he is convinc'd, that it is the best mean for his Edification. By this the first Argument, it appears that when I am convinc'd that another Ministry is more edifying, that it is my Duty to make use thereof, as what is most for my edification; and consequently ought to change as often as my mind changes. In pursuance of this Argument I may turn Presbyterian, Anabaptist, Papist, Quaker, and what not.

The Second Argument is, That since all Believers are commanded to try the Prophets and Spirits, whether they be of God, or no; and to reject the false, and embrace the true; they have therefore a right of choosing their own Pastors, especially since Christ hath given rules to distinguish one from the other. I have been diligent, and very wary in this matter, and think those are the true Shepherds of Jesus Christ, who come in by the door into the Sheepfold, and that all others are but Thieves and Robbers: And if it be my Duty to choose or refuse, as I believe, and am convinc'd, then I am justified in my present choice by your own Argument.

The Third and last Argument was, that the people always, and in the Apostles days had some concern in the choice of their Minister, which I will not go about to deny; but desire you will be so kind to yourself, and just to me, as to suffer me to discharge a good conscience, both towards God, and towards Man; which is my real design in abandoning your Ministry, and going over to the Church of England. And after the most diligent enquiry, I really find Conformity to be a great Duty, and Separation a most formidable

sin: and those multitudes of Arguments you heap u  
for Separation; do with abundance of more Justice  
and reason, make for my present Justification in de-  
parting from among you.

I have so much of Scripture and Reason on my side,  
that he must shut his eyes that will not see it; I will  
add no more at present; but pray to the Living God  
for your better Illumination; who am

Your Real Friend

J. Jones.

This was the last Letter that I sent Mr. Lobb,  
to which I received no Answer, neither had I  
any more conference with him, only chancing to  
meet him one day in a disguise, he said he recei-  
ved my Letter, and would either come and see  
me, or send an Answer, but performed neither:  
His Arguments I carried to a worthy Divine, who  
considered them, and writ a very judicious an-  
swer; which if he would be pleased to make pub-  
lick, might be of great use for the satisfaction of  
Dissenters in that point. These are the most re-  
markable passages that happened between me, and  
those that were of the same Church that I was  
joyned unto, by which it appears, that the trou-  
ble I met withal was not little, which neverthe-  
less to me became a pleasure: For I took great  
delight both to give, and receive satisfaction.

2. In Conforming, I was not only opposed by  
Mr. Lobb and his Congregation, but also by my  
nearest Relations, till by strength of Argument  
I did convince them of the necessity of so doing  
in point of Conscience. The chiefest that I was  
concern'd with in this respect, was my Mother  
and

and Brother, both of them against Conformity, and greatly displeased at me, when they understood how I had dealt with Mr. Lobb and his Congregation, whom (as they had been informed) I had abused in a most gross and wicked manner. Before I durst venture to see them, (having heard that they were much displeased at me) I thought one effectual way to clear my self, and to recover their favour, was by writing unto them, which I did in this manner following.

*Part of a Letter written to my Mother,*

*Dear Mother,*

I Beseech you (in all Duty and Submission) by the Mercies of God in Christ Jesus, to pass by, and forget all the Offences I have at any time committed against you, by my unadvisedness, and indiscretion. I am very sensible that I am but a weak and frail Creature, subject to manifold miscarriages even in the best, and chiefest actions of my Life. This World I find is a Wilderness, wherein we must expect to meet with many great and surprizing Difficulties, and Troubles of various kinds; a large experience whereof you have had already, and how much more you may have, God only knows. This is a day of Tryal with me, as well as with you and my dear Brother, which requires

1.4. great



great prudence, meekness, patience, and self-denial.

I have of late, since I received my freedom, met with greater troubles than most are aware of, not only in Temporal, but also in Spiritual Affairs, which I will briefly relate unto you.

[Here I gave her an Historical account of the methods of God's Providence in working upon me so great a change, which (because I have already sufficiently discovered) I will here omit.] In times past I had as great an aversion to the Church, as many among the Dissenters have, and judged it Popish, and Antichristian, as they do; and thought it no harm to vilifie and reproach her. *O horrid, and monstrous wickedness!* A sin of a Crimson dye, as will appear, by seriously considering the weight of these Arguments.

1. If the Church of England be a true Church of Jesus Christ? (as all moderate Dissenters grant,) then to separate and depart from her Communion, wherein Christ hath not departed, is Schisme.

2. If the Church of England be despised, and exposed to great infamy and contempt among Dissenters, (which she is by all of them more or less) it must be for something which they charge against her, that is sufficient to justify them for so doing, as well as for separating from her; which can never be, unless they can prove her to be Idolatrous in her Worship, or that she teaches false Doctrine, or makes any of her Ceremonies necessary to Salvation; none of which her greatest Adversaries can make out against her; these only she makes use of to justify her separation from the Church of Rome, viz.

1. 'Ido-

1. 'Idolatrous Worship in the *Adoration of the Host, Worshipping of Images, Invocation of Saints, &c.* the Scripture commands separation in this case, *Fly from Idolatry.*

2. The Church of England doth separate from 'Rome, because of her false Doctrines, as *Merit, Indulgences, Purgatory, and the Sacrifice of the Mass,* with many other things, which is another Gospel, than what Christ, and his Apostles taught us; and therefore to be abhorred and forsaken.

3. 'The Church of Rome makes *humane traditions equal with the Word of God,* and things in their own nature indifferent parts of *Divine Worship, and necessary to Salvation:* this is indeed to teach for *Doctrines, the Commandements of men,* and to set up mens inventions by Gods institutions; mens posts by Gods posts; This is indeed *Superstition,* and rendring the Scriptures an imperfect rule for matters of Worship. All these things the Church of England hath wisely declined, and avoided; inasmuch that none of her Ceremonies are parts of Divine Worship, but only adjuncts, or necessary Appendices that are contrived for order, and decency in the Service of God, according to the command of the Apostle, and the Practice of the Primitive Christians long before *Popish Innovations* were introduced or invented, as Ecclesiastical Histories do fully evince.

4. The *Adjuncts of Divine Worship* (which respect *time, place, gesture and habit*) are not determined in Holy Scriptures, but left to Humane Prudence to appoint under the Gospel; and ought to be observed, provided they are not imposed

‘imposed as *matters of Faith*, which to refuse  
 ‘then is sinful. This Power every Pastour as-  
 ‘sumes in his Congregation, though they deny  
 ‘it to the King, and those that are legally in  
 ‘Authority over them, both in Church and  
 ‘State.

‘How many things do Dissenters use about  
 ‘Divine Worship which God hath never com-  
 ‘manded? and they enforce it as a *Duty* on their  
 ‘Members from the same Scriptures as we do;  
 ‘obey them that have the rule over you; and any  
 ‘member that opposes the Orders of the Church  
 ‘he is of, not thinking himself obliged to regard  
 ‘them, is accounted carnal, proud, and obsti-  
 ‘nate; and is there not the same parity of rea-  
 ‘son, for the Church of *England* to conclude so  
 ‘of them, who for no other reason leave and  
 ‘despise her?

‘We read of some in the Apostles time, that  
 ‘when *false brethren* crept into the Church, and  
 ‘required the *observation of many of the Jewish*  
 ‘*Ceremonies*, as *Circumcision*, &c. that the Gospel  
 ‘of Jesus Christ might be promoted, the Apostle  
 ‘suffered them to be observed, and made no di-  
 ‘sturbance in the Church, but submitted, till  
 ‘they made them *matters of Faith, and necessary*  
 ‘*to Salvation*. Then he forbids them the Com-  
 ‘munion of such, and tells them, if they should be  
 ‘*circumcised Christ would profit them nothing*.

‘The Church of *England* is so far from Idola-  
 ‘try, that she hates all manner of Superstition,  
 ‘such as is used in the Church of *Rome*, and also  
 ‘among Dissenters.

‘Superstition is a supposing that to be well  
 ‘pleasing in the sight of God, which he hath not  
 ‘com-

‘commanded, appropriating thereunto an extraordinary vertue that accrues to such who carefully perform the same; or Judging that to be sinful, and injurious to the Souls of men, which God hath not forbidden in his Holy Word.

‘These are the two Branches of Superstition: The former of which the Church of *Rome* is Guilty in a high measure, and the Dissenters have dearly espoused the latter; but the Church of *England* hath carefully avoided both.

‘Many good Christians consider not these things, but fall into Errors, to the great dishonour of God, as well as the reproach and weakening of this Nation, by the most unchristian Divisions that are among us; occasioned by Pride and Ignorance, and probably Covetousness together.

‘Hence many blemishes, and faults are found in the Church, and these by the Daughters of Pride, Malice and Envy, are magnified to a wonderful greatness; whereas they ought to be extenuated, and covered with the greatest Charity; and all Prudence and Care taken, to remove or amend them.

‘But contrariwise, the Church must be rent and torn in sunder, under the pretence of greater Purity and Sanctity, and avoiding Superstition; And so thinking to avoid danger, they run themselves upon the spears point; and no wonder if divisions and subdivisions follow thereupon.

‘A man by pursuing the first Principles of Separation may run (and if he be faithful, and sincere in the said pursuit ought to run) from  
the



‘the Church of *England* to *Presbytery*, thence to  
 ‘*Independency* and *Anabaptisme*, and so to *Quake-*  
 ‘*risme* and what not.

‘The *Presbyterians* cannot away with the *Cere-*  
 ‘*monies of the Church*, because they are of *Humane*  
 ‘*Appointment*.

‘The *Independents* cannot subject to the decision  
 ‘of Synods; because they are humane Decisions.

‘The *Anabaptists* cannot believe but *Infants*  
 ‘*Baptisme* is a humane Innovation.

‘The *Quakers* and others, being for greater  
 ‘*Purity*, cannot endure set *Forms of Preaching*,  
 ‘nor *stinting the Spirit with respect to time*, with  
 ‘many other things, looking upon them as *Hu-*  
 ‘*mane inventions*, and not to be tolerated in the  
 ‘*Service of God*.

‘But what shall I say in this matter? whether  
 ‘will not mens Fancies lead them, if they are not  
 ‘restrained by some Law? and what disorder and  
 ‘confusion, doth follow the breach of good and  
 ‘wholesome Laws, and Uniformity in Religion?

‘If all Dissenters were so good and wise, as to  
 ‘cleave heartily to the Church of *England*, how  
 ‘happy might we be? which they might do, and  
 ‘have power to Exercise as strict Discipline  
 ‘(which is all they plead for) as in any of their  
 ‘Congregations. But what strange prejudice  
 ‘hath corrupted their judgments, and blinded  
 ‘their eyes, let all wise men Judge.

‘As for my part when I consider the Church of  
 ‘*England* as to her constitution, I cannot but  
 ‘give her (as she deserves) the preheminance of  
 ‘the best in the World.

‘Yet when I speak in her vindication, and  
 ‘praise; I do not go about to justify all persons  
 ‘that

that profess themselves of her *Communion*, nor all their Practices : But the soundness of her Doctrines and Institutions, which are the strongest Bulwarks against Popery and Superstition of any in the World ; and none hath defended the Protestant Religion like to these noble Champions of her communion.

Now to judge her *Popish* and *Antichristian*, or no true Church of Christ ; (as all separation from her intimates) is as great a sin, I am persuaded, as any under the Sun, next unto the sin of Angels, who being Ambitious of *Independency*, became most wretched Devils.

Wherefore, (Dear Mother) consider I pray that separation from the true establish'd Church is a Sin, and a complicated Sin, of 1. Pride. 2. Uncharitableness, or want of true Christian Love. 3. Giving Offence. 4. Schism. 5. Disobedience to Magistrates in and for the Lord. 6. Disobedience to the Gospel, which commands Peace, Unity, Concord, Long-suffering, Forbearance, &c. 7. Superstition, or making that sin which God hath not made so, and if the avoiding of all these sins be not sufficient to justify me in separating from a separate Church ; I know not what is.

I doubt not but if you search into the matter as well as I, you will find it so ; if not I beseech you to shew me my mistake and I'll recant.

But God knows the sincerity of my heart that nothing could have drawn me from the communion of Mr. *Lobb's* People, but the apprehensions of sinning in the respects fore-mentioned.

And as for the Information you received of my

' my abusing him and his Congregation, calling  
 ' them Rebels, and Seditious, as some have re-  
 ' ported. I deny it, 'tis false, having no ap-  
 ' pearance of Truth in it, further than that I  
 ' laid, separate Congregations were unlawful  
 ' Assemblies; whatever else I said in my Letter  
 ' to Mr. *Lobb* refer'd wholly to my self, with re-  
 ' spect to the convictions I laid under. Many I be-  
 ' lieve are apt to think that I am become an Apo-  
 ' state, a meer cast away; the Lord grant them  
 ' more Charity the best ornament of a Christian.  
 ' God knows, and his Holy Spirit can bear me  
 ' witness, that I cannot with any peace of Con-  
 ' science continue with them; neither am I any  
 ' thing the less a Christian, but rather more in  
 ' obeying the Will of the Lord, and I can with  
 ' comfort reflect upon what I have done in this  
 ' matter as to the main; viz. my leaving Mr.  
 ' *Lobb*, and adhering to the *Church of England*  
 ' which can be no breach of Covenant in me, but  
 ' an effectual performance of it, endeavouring to  
 ' stick close to the rule, which Jesus Christ hath  
 ' laid down in Gospel, which was all I promised at  
 ' my Joyning with Mr. *Lobb*, and now endeavour  
 ' to perform to the glory of our dear and blessed  
 ' Lord Jesus, and will through the assistance of his  
 ' Grace endeavour to do unto the end of my Life.  
 ' To live in wilful Sin, when one is enlightened  
 ' in the knowledge of the Truth, is a dreadful  
 ' thing you know, and this I am perswaded (by  
 ' clear evidence from holy Scripture) is my case  
 ' while I continued disobedient to the good and  
 ' wholsom laws of a well established government  
 ' in which we live.  
 ' Therefore (Dear Mother) I do humbly en-  
 ' treat

'treat you, not to pass any severe censures upon  
'me, but extend that Christian Charity towards  
'me, which your self would desire, were you un-  
'der the same convictions I am.

'I blame none for the Zeal they have of Gods  
'Glory, though they do amiss through many  
'Errors and mistakes they lye under, but do  
'pray that God would enlighten them, and  
'bring them into the way of Truth.

'I shall add no more, but only implore the fa-  
'vour, and blessing of the God, and Father of  
'our Lord Jesus Christ to descend upon us all,  
'to guide us in the way of Unity, and Concord,  
'Peace and True Religion; and that he would  
'particularly multiply his Mercy upon you, and  
'enable you still to continue Motherly Affections  
'towards me, who am

Your dutiful and obedient  
Son, J. Jones.

With this Letter I sent another to my *Brother*,  
who had been visited a long time with sickness  
and lameness, whereof he died the 22th. of *May*  
following, 1682. which Letter is as follow-  
eth;

Dear Brother,

**I** Had come my self ere this to see my *Mother* and  
you but that I have been letted partly through  
indisposition of body, and multiplicity of business;  
and partly through fear of appearing to you both while  
you were raised to a passion against me, through the  
false reports that you have heard, but I design God  
willing



willing speedily to come and visit you. In the mean while I thought it highly expedient to send this messenger before-hand to represent my case unto you, that when I come I may have the less Apology to make for my self.

And withal I would earnestly request you not to be too hot at any time when we should with all meekness, love and humility, discourse about matters of Religion; then to be censorious and passionate (when things occur not to our sentiments) is very unchristian.

For we are men no longer than we are guided by reason, and the wisest of men are the most ready to bear reason and follow it, though it be to the parting with that which they have most dearly espoused when they find it unreasonable to make a defence.

As I know my self to be a sinful Creature and subject to error, as well as other Temptations; So I desire to be reprov'd in the Spirit of meekness, and by arguments from Scripture, and reason to be convinced; so shall I be won, and drawn sweetly by those cords of Love.

But to be reviled or censured, I love not, though I thank God I can bear it without returning the like; yet it grieves me to see many good Christians guilty of it, who will not be brought to perceive it by themselves.

But whatever you or others may think of me, in this I can rejoice, even the Testimony of a good Conscience, that whereinssoever I apprehend my self to have done evil I hope I have sincerely repented of it, and pursue only that which I conceive to be good and acceptable in the sight of God.

The Lord look in mercy down upon you, and enable you diligently to examine into the true cause of his contending with you, and help you to answer his end therein, that he may return in mercy and hear all our prayers to your health and comfort through Jesus Christ; as prayeth

Your dear and loving Brother  
(who is ready and willing to  
the uttermost of his power to  
help you in all your troubles)

J. Jones.

These two Letters answered my end so well, that when I went to see them (contrary to expectation) they had very little to say against me but what I could easily answer.

Thirdly, I had divers other Friends and Acquaintance to encounter withal, that were of other Congregations with whom I had many Disputations and brought several of them to abate much of their Prejudices against the Church of England; though others remained as hardened as ever.

Blessed be thy holy name, O most gracious and merciful Father, for thine infinite goodness to this Church which thou hast in a wonderful manner established amongst us, and hitherto defended, notwithstanding the power, policy, and wrath of Rome; and the envie, and malice of some Dissenters.

Thy name be magnified for ever who dost send thy Spirit to convince and convert to the Lord Christ Jesus, and who raisest up instruments of thy praise in

this evil generation, which gives joyful hopes that succeeding ages shall stand up to exalt thy righteous name.

Oh! That thou who hast raised so many heavenly young plants in this thy Vineyard, wouldst water them continually with thy heavenly grace, causing the dew of heaven continually to descend upon them, that they may grow and flourish and multiply in abundance, throughout all generations, even to the end of the World: And for thine infinite goodness to me in particular my soul shall bless thee through Jesus Christ, both now and to all Eternity, Amen.

*A Collection of the Reasons which fully convince me that Conformity is a great Duty.*

**I**T pleased the alwise God in creating the World, to make man the superiour of all his Creatures here below, by enduing him with a rational Soul, having made him but a degree lower than the Angels of Heaven, Reason being all the Image of God which the fall hath left us, by our making use thereof, we discover our selves to be superiour to the Beasts that perish. Wherefore he that cannot render a reason for what he doth, acteth not like a Man, but like a Brute. And if we ought to render a reason for whatever we do, much more ought we to do so for things of great moment.

Of all the concerns we are to mind, those that respect our Souls are the chiefest: And he that knows the worth and value of his Soul, will consult with reason what must be done to promote its Eternal Good and Happiness.

Reason will induce a man to do whatever hath a tendency thereunto, and diligently to avoid the contrary. But good Reason is not to be found out, but by a diligent search of its opposite, comparing things together; my own particular case will be a sufficient demonstration herein. As for instance; In changing my opinion in a concern of my Soul's Eternal welfare: I have discovered my Reasons for so doing in that Historical Relation which I have given.



Which I was not able to perform, till I had compared the same with those opposite Reasons which before I built upon; whence better reason forced me to relinquish the former, as is evident enough to all men that will but submit themselves to the conduct of reason. But because those Reasons are promiscuously interwoven in the said Discourse, they appear not in their full strength, as if they were united together. For which cause I have made this Collection, with an addition of some more; which plainly evince *Conformity to be a great Duty, and Separation a sin to be avoided by every true Christian amongst us*. Even Nature it self affords us reasons for this, as well as Religion; and indeed nothing is more agreeable to Natural Reason, than that there should be an unanimous concord, and union among all the persons of a Family or Country.

For where it otherwise happens that Divisions, and Schisms do engender, and creep in, it tends to the overthrow, and destruction of one, as well as the other. And Religion, it lays a special Obligation upon the Conscience to preserve Union, both in the Church, and in the State: But to be particular, as the case doth require: Conformity is a great Duty, as appears from these considerations taken,

*First, From the excellency of Conformity.*

*Secondly, From the great necessity of Conforming.*

*Thirdly, From the great benefits that do attend Conformity.*

*Fourthly, From the disadvantages of refusing to conform.*

All these a little explained, will abundantly set forth the real beauty and lustre of our Church, which is much eclipsed by those false representations, which the Devil, and man have agree'd to put upon her; and therefore

First of all, I have great reason to conform to the Protestant Religion Established by Law, when I consider the excellency of it, how admirably all its parts are adapted for promoting the great design of the Gospel, which is Holiness in Heart, and Life, in mind, and behaviour.

I dare challenge all our boasting Dissenters to produce the like; for they have clipt off that Glory and Beauty which us'd to adorn Christ's Religion in former days, and made the blind World fall in love with the Worshipers of our Lord Jesus; who behaved themselves wisely towards such as were without; expressing the inward frame of their Spirits by their outward carriage and deportment; according to what the Apostle saith, *Glorifie God with your Bodies, and with your Spirits which are his*, and must therefore both be employed in his Service.

Accordingly the Church of England doth act, after the Primitive Institution by our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Blessed Apostles, having purged herself from all those abuses which *Antichrist that man of sin* hath introduced into the Religion of Christ, with respect both to her Doctrine, and Worship.

Which of all her Adversaries dare attempt to prove her guilty of false Doctrine, hath she not diligently declined all the false Doctrines of the Church of Rome, as *Merit, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, the Sacrifice of the Mass, &c.*

Hath she not likewise declined all the Errors of the *Arrians*, *Socinians*, *Religians*, and *Antinomians*; and yet notwithstanding, she can hardly have the Name of a Church of Christ, among our great self-admirers.

And as to her *Worship*, hath she not purged out all *Idolatry* and *Superstition*? What *Hofe* doth she adore? What *Images* or *Idols* doth she worship? What *Angels* or *Saints* doth she pray unto? What doth she make necessary to *Salvation*, that God himself hath not commanded? What Church can have greater purity than this? And for Charlty so much commended by God himself, what Church can compare with ours?

All these things render her truly amiable, and excellent indeed; and all those that separate from her Communion, declare themselves unworthy of her. There is nothing I know of, that can render a Church really excellent, but this Church abounds therewith, as much as any in the Christian World, and therefore I have reason to embrace her Communion, (and decline all others) as being the most excellent of all.

Secondly, Another reason is taken from the necessity of Conforming.

God hath made it my Duty to Conform, and it is a great sin in me, (as well as others) to refuse the same. For this I hope to produce better Arguments than Mr. *Lobb* did, to prove, That a Believer might choose his own Pastor, though the Magistrate forbid him.

That it is a Duty to conform, (and consequently a sin to separate) will appear plainly.

First, If we consider that to conform is lawful, there is no sin in it, though the Adversaries of

of our Church have managed this Argument against us with all the craft imaginable, yet nothing is more evident, than that their Allegations are vain, compar'd to those solid Reasons given by the Noble Worthies of the Church of England that have been engaged in that Controversie. For since she hath purg'd out whatever is Idolatrous and Superstitious, can it be sin to hold Communion with her? Surely no.

That Religion wherein so many Thousands have been saved, in defence whereof many have lay'd down their lives, and most readily suffered Martyrdom, which is so agreeable in every thing to the Word of God, having in it nothing contrary to the same: It must necessarily be lawful to hold Communion with it.

And her Adversaries discover themselves to be men of a strange temper in denying such an apparent truth; for nothing can be more lawful nor better warranted from the Word of God, and therefore it becomes an indispensable Duty, as is plainly evident from Holy Scriptures, especially if we consider in the

Second place, Those Commands that are for Peace and Union, where it is said, *Follow Peace with all Men*: And, *As much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men. Give no offence to the Jew, nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God. Above all things have fervent Charity*; This is the chiefest Character of a sincere Christian; for indeed Charity *suffereth long, and is kind; it beareth all things, endureth all things, and covereth a multitude of faults.* And all such as are destitute of it, though they pretend to have all knowledge, to understand all Mysteries, to have all Faith, yet the Apostle tells us they have nothing.



Contrary to this Grace of Charity, are all *envyings, evil speaking, strivings, and Dissentions about words, and things that are indifferent, which the Apostles utterly forbid.* Now since to remain separate from the Church of *England*, with which it is lawful to hold Communion, is to abandon all Charity, and to disobey all those precepts, enjoying peace, concord, humility, &c. It appears to be my great Duty to Conform, to live peaceably with my fellow Christians, and as much as is possible, to give them no offence; to judge charitably of their actions, and demeanours in their worshipping and serving God; not to censure nor rail against them, much less to speak evil of them, and in all things to comply with them, save only where the Scriptures declare it sinful. Therefore it being a Duty, there is a necessity of performing it, which makes it plainly appear, That I have great reason to conform.

3. The necessity of conforming will further appear in that God hath commanded us to *obey Magistrates, and all that are in Authority over us.*

That this is so, all men must grant; the Scriptures being so clear and full, that it is impossible to deny it. That the Magistrate, and such who are in Authority, do require Conformity is sufficiently evident; that conformity is lawful, and no way repugnant to the Word of God, has been abundantly proved, and likewise confest by many of them that separate.

Only that which they object, is, *That many things are required in conforming, which are not expressly commanded in the Word of God;* (affording Christian Magistrates, not so great a Power as God affords to Infidels,) and produce the exam-  
ple

ple of *Nadab and Abihu*, who were destroyed for doing *that which God commanded them not*; and the example of the Children of *Israel*, who *set up their abominations in the House of God*, who *built again the High places of Baal*, and *caused their Sons and Daughters to go through the fire unto Molech*, which *God commanded them not*. Alas! These things God was so far from commanding, that he had forbid them so to do before. And besides, they made it a great part of their Religion, and necessary to Salvation, as they did afterwards, *washing of hands*, and divers other *superstitious things*; which became so by the stress they lay'd upon them, and the vertue which they made the people believe was naturally in them, teaching thereby for *Doctrines the Commandments of men*; intimating by so doing, that God had omitted something necessary to their Salvation, which he had not commanded them.

But what is there in Conformity imposed, as necessary to Salvation, that God hath not commanded in his word? There is nothing that could ever yet be proved to convince any man, that well understands what is necessary thereunto.

That which is necessary to Salvation, is not alterable by any Law of Man: But all those things required in order to Conformity, are alterable, and may be changed as those in Authority see cause; therefore indifferent, and no way necessary to Salvation, simply and in themselves, but accidentally, as it is our Duty to obey the Higher Powers in things that are not sinful; which to resist, is to resist the Ordinance of God: *And they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.* Rom. 13. 1, 2, 3.

And

And when God threatens thus, we had need look to it that we be not deceived, for there are many deceivers gone forth into the World, as the *Quakers*, and others, whom I will not name, that regard not such places of Scripture, and are not afraid to speak evil of *Dignities*, which makes me tremble to think what an account they will be able to give to God, the Righteous Judge, who will one day reckon for all these things.

This is a weighty case of Conscience, and it is strange to see such, who have very tender Consciences in other things, make no Conscience of this, though the Scripture saith, that they *must needs be subject for Conscience sake*.

But why should I wonder at this? Since I my self was so lately deceived in this matter, by believing Mr. Lobb, whom I judged so wise, as to know how to prove the Church of *England* guilty of *sinful impositions*, and so good, as not to deceive us for a Thousand Worlds; not considering that frail man is subject to be deceived; and the Scriptures must be fulfilled, which say, *Wicked men, and seducers grow worse, and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*.

There being nothing more plain, than that it is a great Duty to obey the Magistrate (in things indifferent, and not Essential to Religion or Salvation it self) then 'tis evident that Conformity is highly necessary, and a great Duty, and in no wise to be neglected.

4. There is a great necessity of conforming in order to the evincing the truth of Grace in the Soul. For the truth of Grace will appear in a Universal Obedience to all Gods commands; *then shall I not be ashamed* (saith Holy David) *when I have a respect*

spect to all thy Commandments. If ye love me, (saith Christ) keep my Commandments. A partial Obedience is a certain sign of Hypocrisie.

Where Obedience is Evangelical, 'tis also universal; A gracious Soul is ready to say *Speak Lord, thy Servant beareth; declare thy Will, and so I am ready to perform it.* Behold, here God will have us be subject to the Higher Powers, as being ordained by him; we are commanded to obey every Ordinance of man for the Lords sake: Yet how many, by their actions, do in effect say, they will not obey them.

This is an evil sign, and wo be to them at last, that shall be found partial in their Obedience. As for my part, I think it highly necessary to obey this, as well as other Commands; and except I conform, I cannot render a universal Obedience, nor evince true love to Christ.

Whence the necessity of conforming doth abundantly appear to me, and there can be nothing more agreeable to reason, than to do that, which is so highly necessary.

5. I might add the great Argument made use of for Separation, to prove the necessity of Conforming, viz.

Because I am convinc'd in my Conscience, that Conformity is most agreeable to the Word of God, therefore it is my Duty to conform.

This is the main strength of the separatists, when they have no other reason to produce for separating, they say, That they are convinc'd in their Consciences, it is their Duty, and they ought not to act against their Consciences; to them who are convinc't, that to Conform is a sin, to them it is so.

A very



► A very sorry refuge this is, and common to all sorts of Sectaries, and affords me as much relief in this case, as any of them all.

But I thank God, I have other, and better reasons to insist upon; only what hath been said, may suffice to prove, that it is extremely necessary to conform to the good old way of the Church of *England*. What is thus necessary, and so great a Duty, is most unreasonable to be refused, and this is the second reason (to prove that Conformity is a great Duty) taken from the necessity of Conforming.

The Third Reason is taken from the *great benefits that attend Conformity*.

The Benefits that flow thence are twofold; First with respect to God, 2. with respect to Man.

First, The benefit that accompanies Conformity, hath respect to God, who requires the same, he hath commanded us so to do, in *observing of whose Commands there is great reward*.

God will not forget such as do it, out of Conscience to him, but will Crown their endeavours of serving him in all respects; with his Blessing here, and glory hereafter; whereas men that are partial in their Obedience, God will abhor all their good services, because they have not a *respect to all his Commandments*. For those that neglect this Duty, cannot have that true peace of Conscience that God hath promised: *Great peace have all they that keep thy Commandments*.

2. This is not all the benefit that comes by Conforming, there is another benefit with respect to man; It is a Duty so pleasing both to God, and Man, that it appears great imprudence

dence, and inconsideration in any to neglect it.

They that conform do well, *and the Rulers are only a terror to them that do evil; If thou do well, thou shalt have praise of the same, but if thou do evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the Sword in vain, but is the Minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon them that do evil.* Rom. 13. 3, 4. Therefore I have reason to conform, considering the great benefit that cometh thereby.

Fourthly and Lastly, They that refuse to Conform, when both God and Man require it from them; are guilty of a great evil; for they displease both, and what good or benefit can then be expected.

The mad World, who care not how much they displease God, will notwithstanding be very diligent to please men, from whom they expect to receive benefit; nevertheless these will venture upon the displeasure of both, to please their own Humour and Parties.

And those that are truly Gracious among them, God will either bring them to repentance for this sin, or else follow them with Calamities, and Afflictions all the days of their lives; either outward in their Bodies and Estates, or inward in their Souls, by spiritual Desertions, and withholding from them the *light of his countenance*; for *there is no true peace to them that do evil, saith the Lord.* As for wicked men, and seducers (of which sort God knows there are too many) though they may prosper in the World, and meet with no trouble, yet it will be bitterness in the latter end, their punishment being reserved for another world; it being express, *They that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.*

And

And since these are some of those Evils that attend *Nonconformity*, I have abundant reason upon the same account to Conform.

Thus I have given my reasons why I have Conformed.

And if all this will not justify my present Conforming, I will in the next place discover all the Objections that I perceive have been made use of against me for so doing, and declare my apprehensions concerning them all.

O most merciful Father, thou judgest not as men judgeth; therefore have I boldness to approach before thee, who art my God and Gracious Father. Thou knowest I have not undertaken to produce these Reasons for any other end, than so let my Brethren know, wherefore I have forsaken them, and to undeceive them of what they have falsely imagined and conceived against me. O Righteous Father, let it have this effect, to create in them a Holy jealousy, lest they also should be deceived in this matter; for the sake of Jesus Christ, my dear Lord and Redeemer, Amen.

My

*My Apprehensions concerning the Objections  
used against Conforming.*

**M**ANifold are the Objections used against our Church, and those that conform thereunto, especially if they have espoused other opinions (as I have done) and afterwards hold communion with her.

It is not strange, to see a man whose Education has been that way, to appear for the Church, but one who from his youth hath been trained up to an aversion to her, to be thus changed is remarkable.

But as it is the effect of Reason and a right Understanding of the cause of that aversion, it is not at all to be wondred at.

The Objections that have been chiefly used against me, will appear in these two things, which respect,

First, *My being a Member of an Independent Church.* And,

Secondly, *My forsaking them, to embrace the communion of the Church of England.*

First, As to my being a Member of a Congregational Church they say; 'That when I gave up my self to them, to be a member of that particular Church to which I was related by voluntary consent, and Solemn engagement, I was come to years of Understanding, capable to judge whether they or the Church of England did serve God in the purest way, therefore ought still to hold communion with them unless I intended



‘intended to make my self guilty of the Sin of  
‘Schisme by separating from a pure Church of  
‘Jesus Christ.

I answer ; ’tis true, I was come to years of  
Understanding, but nevertheless was so much a  
Novice, as not to be a competent Judge of such  
sublime Affairs.

I did act then according to what I understood ;  
for I really believed that the Church of *England*  
was so corrupt, and so nearly allied to *Rome*, that  
I thought it was sin to hold communion with  
her ; and that the *Independent way* was the *purest*,  
and Mr. *Lobbs* Congregation the most excellent,  
as being composed of a most holy and pious Mi-  
nister and People. Yet all this doth not oblige  
me to continue in communion with them, if I  
find I was deceived in my judgment. For I see  
upon a strict Inquiry into the truth of the business,  
that the Church of *England* is not so corrupt as  
they represent her to be ; but really such as I  
have represented her.

That she so far differs from the Church of  
*Rome*, as that she will suffer the greatest persecu-  
tions, rather than be guilty of any of her Idola-  
tries or superstitions.

That she hath an equal aversion, as well to  
those that are of that party ; as to such who are  
lawless, and disobedient ; among whom I rank  
the *Independents* and *Presbyterians*, as well as the  
more gross Enthusiasts ; for I do not find that  
their Love and Obedience is of the right Gospel  
stamp, such as our Lord Jesus Christ doth re-  
quire from his Saints.

My Apprehension of things now, is not the  
same as it was then, accordingly my actions  
differ.

I did (contrary to the Will of God) join in Fellowship with that Congregation, whereof *Mrs. Dobb*, (I know not by what Law) assumed to himself the Pastoral Charge; which then I thought the most excellent Church, and constituted in all things according to the will of Jesus Christ; But I find it otherwise, when I read, and seriously take notice of his Laws and Precepts. For what Gospel Church can that be whose very Foundation is laid in perfect disobedience to the Gospel it self.

The Gospel doth not encourage a gathering of a Church or Churches, under a pretence of greater purity, to destroy the peace of a pure Church that is established in a Nation; but exclaims against it, discovering the heinousness of the sin. Which sin I fear the Dissenters will have much to answer for; for God will one day discover who are the Authors of all those lamentable divisions that are amongst us.

I pray God it may not fall so heavy upon dissenters, as it will upon the Papists. Yet this I dare be peremptory in that the *Papists* could never have had such success, had not the dissenters been the instruments, whereby they have wrought almost to the bringing a second Civil War amongst us.

Whence I observe that dissenters in striving against our Church, will I doubt in the end, (if they repent not) betray, not only us, but themselves also, into the hands of the *Papists*. Whereas if they would but obey, those strong injunctions our Lord Jesus hath laid upon them to endeavour the Churches Peace, and to obey their superiours in lawful things, and conform so far as they

they can without sin, I dare say it would be the only effectual way to secure us from the designs of *Rome*; and to make us invincible against all *Papish* Attempts.

But alas! here lies our misery, though the dissenters do acknowledge that Union alone can secure us against *Papery*, yet (through the wiles of Satan, and Jesuitical Policy) they propose such Terms for Union, that will inevitably bring us all in bondage to *Rome*; and that is the reason I conceive why our Superiours do not answer their proposals.

To alter, and change Laws, is of a very dangerous consequence, especially if we consider the different Humors and Interests that are amongst us, how impossible it is to please all men. Yet Mr. *Lobb* is pleased to say, that we will not part with what we judge but indifferent, though the desired Union might thereby be obtained. But herein he is much deceived, for by so doing, our differences would not be composed, nor that Union obtained.

There are some in the Church of *England*, who would be offended if any alteration should be made; and therefore to alter those things indifferent, would be to create a difference between Conformist and Conformist; and but very few of the multitudes of dissenters would conform notwithstanding; in such that still great divisions would remain, if not greater than before; which shews the Inexpediency of altering those things indifferent, which by many dissenters are confessed to be lawful.

As appears by a Book call'd *The Harmlessness of the Ancient and Modern Nonconformists*, where

where the Author saith (page the fourth) that *The expediency of lawful things makes them duty.* Therefore from him we have this good Argument against their separating.

If that conforming to the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, or the ordinary Lords Days Service be lawful, as that Author doth acknowledge; and expedient, as appears from the ill consequences that will attend altering the same; then,

The lawfulness and expediency thereof makes it duty to Conform, according to this Author, Who endeavouring to justify their Nonconformity, shews the inexpediency of Conforming from the differences it would create between the Nonconformists, not taking notice of the Divisions that would attend the altering thereof not only between the Conformists but the Non-conformists also.

For what more evident, than if the Church were strip of all those antient customs in use (which by the Apostles and other Holy men were appointed for decency, and to prevent disorder in the Church according to the Divine Law) many would be greatly offended at it, and it may be divide for that reason.

Yet perhaps some of the *Presbyterians* might then conform, who would for so doing be hated by the *Independents*, and others, who I believe will never agree with the Church unless they might have their own Wills, to do as they please in all things: which if they had, how would they be exalted above the rest of their Brethren? How would they erect Churches? and what different modes of Worship would there be? Judge ye.



And I dare be bold to say, without breach of Charity, if all this were afforded them, we should still be the object of their contempt, and disagree as bad as ever.

But here I have run out of what I intended, and beg your Pardon for this digression.

Secondly, Another Objection they have greatly us'd against me, is this.

'In joyning with us, (say they) you have but  
'made use of that power, wherewith Christ hath  
'invested you, of choosing your own Pastor, and  
'having made choice of Mr. *Lobb*, you ought to  
'attend upon his Ministry, notwithstanding the  
'Magistrate forbids you.

This is agreeable to Mr. *Lobbs* own Papers, but how agreeable to Truth, or reason, let all men judge.

If a Believer have power to choose his own Pastor, yet it is not an unlimited power; The people have some concern in the choice of a Pastor, even in the Church of *England*.

Weak Believers are no competent judges of the Abilities of Ministers as well as of their soundness in Faith.

For who more ready to be tossed by *every wind of Doctrine*, than young Converts? (weak Believers) whose zeal vehemently carries them after crafty Preachers, who pretending to more Holiness than others, catch the simple, and live upon them, though it be to the hurt of their Souls. And though these persons have the root of the matter in them, yet they are easily infected with poysonous Doctrines: And the sincerity and goodness which they apprehend to be in these men,

is the bait that doth allure them. Therefore it concerns every Believer to *try the Spirits*, for *Satan can transform himself into an Angel of light, and false Apostles* are gone out into the World, to deceive (if it were possible) the very Elect, who may be deceived by them in many things, to the great dishonour of God, and hurt of their own Souls; though God will not suffer them to perish eternally for his promise sake, and because they did it *through Ignorance*.

And therefore it is that Christ saith, *false prophets, and false Christs shall come into the World, to deceive the nations*, insomuch that if it were possible the very Elect should not be saved. Which plainly shews that Believers themselves shall not wholly escape the deceits of these men, who must put on a great shew of Sanctity, and more purity than others, or else it can never be effected.

If a Believer have in some respects a power to choose his own Pastor, (which I will not dispute) and through great indiscretion makes use of that power, and doth actually chuse a Pastor, who afterwards he finds to be a false Apostle: is he obliged by any Covenant to continue that choice? surely no.

Christs command is a sufficient warrant for him to separate. *Take heed that no man deceive you, and if any man shall say unto you, lo here is Christ, or there, believe it not; wherefore if they shall say unto you, behold he is in the desert, go not forth; behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not: beware of false Prophets, wolves in sheeps cloathing, &c.*

As for my part I acknowledge I did make choice of Mr. Lobb to be my Pastor; I was then very

weak, no competent Judge to discern between the true Shepherds of Jesus Christ, and the false; my ignorance, and rashness was my sin, which as soon as God convinced me of, I endeavoured to avoid by conforming.

3. They say I ought not to separate from them, unless I can prove, *That they impose something upon me that is sinful.*

As to that, I answer,

They not only impose that which is *sinful, and contrary to the express Will of God*, but also *omit things that are expedient; yea, and commanded in the Word of God*, the truth of this will appear most plain thus.

First, They impose things *sinful, and contrary to Gods Holy Word*; which saith, *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers; obey every Ordinance of man, for the Lords sake*; but they say no, obey them not, (directly opposing the Word of God,) for they require you to do things in Gods Worship, which he hath not commanded; Therefore you may lawfully disobey them: *It is better to obey God than man, &c.*

To this I reply as our Saviour did to the Pharisees; *This (indeed) ought principally to be done to fear God, and keep all his Commandments, and the other ought not to be left undone, to honour our Parents, (that is, our Superiours,) unless they command us what God hath in his Word revealed to be sinful.* What need had there been of these Commands (of Obedience to our Superiours) had not God given them some power of commanding, even with respect to Gods Worship, in things that tend only to decency and order. This the Apostle confirms, when he saith, *Let all things be done decently,*

*decently, &c.* Therefore who hath Power to appoint these things, but those that are in Authority over us, even the *Higher Powers*, whom we may not resist or disobey, in things that are in themselves lawful, as all those things are, which are used in the Church of *England*.

From whence it will appear, that none who joyn with any particular Church, separate from the true Church established in the Nation, but must comply with this sin. If this sin of Disobedience were not craftily imposed upon the Consciences of Dissenters, we should have very few to separate from the Church of *England*. And that it is meerly an imposition is evident, because none can be Members of particular Churches that will not comply therewith. Therefore *this Sin*, as it is made a necessary term of Communion, is in Mr. Lobb's own Judgment to be avoided, and in no wise to be observed by good Christians; (the Counterplot for Union.) Therefore let all men judge what reason I have to leave him and his Congregation, since I cannot hold Communion with them without sin. And

2. As they require that which is sinful in order to hold Communion with them, (namely to resist the *Higher Powers*) so they also omit what is expedient and necessary.

The expediency of lawful things makes them Duty. All those things that are observed in the Church of *England* are lawful, as I shall abundantly prove, and are owned to be so by many Non-conformists; they are also expedient. For is it not becoming Christians reverently to make their approach before God, as well in publique, as in private; in the Church, as well as in the Clo-



set; by being uncovered, and by bowing before him? (who hath promised in a peculiar manner, *to be present in the Assemblies of his people*.) after the example of those *Nehemiah 8. 6.* and *Psalms 95. 6.* Is it not expedient and necessary to avoid all occasion of contention, strife, debate, &c? Yet these are the things (with many more) that are omitted by Dissenters, though they themselves say, that the expediency of that which is lawful, makes it Duty.

But what should I mention these things, when they omit many things that *God himself hath commanded his Holy Word*; as for Instance. *1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, 3.* *I exhort therefore that [first of all] Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of thanks be [made] for all Men for Kings, and for all that are in Authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness, and Honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.* Here are many things very remarkable, which Dissenters generally omit. They have no Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and Thanksgivings [made] for any of these occasions: And though we in the Church of *England* have plenty, yet no Command of the King, or the Parliament, or any superiour Power is sufficient to engage them to make use of any [made] Prayers, Supplications, Intercessions, or thanksgivings, though they acknowledge them to be as good as ever was made use of.

And the reason is, because they are *forms*, though this Text doth justify these forms as they are used in the Church of *England*, and appointed by the Book of *Common Prayer*: I exhort, that *first of all*, (before preaching, when the Congregation

gation is come together; to worship God, that) *Prayers, Supplications, Intercessions, and giving of thanks be [made] for all men, for Kings, and all that are in Authority over us.*

The Book of Common Prayer was made in Obedience to this Divine Command, which is sufficient to justify the necessity of our compliance therewith. Yet this by them is omitted, though enjoined by Authority Divine, as well as Humane; and when they do pray (after their manner) in publique, or in private, it is not without a strange Omission of this Command. 'Tis true, some of them will pray for the King and the Magistrates, but I never heard any of them pray for the Clergy, except for such only as separate, but will pray against them, as counting them Limbs of Antichrist, that God would pour down the Vials of his Wrath, and Vengeance upon them, that he would pluck them up, and root them out, to make way for them, who (if you will believe them) are the only true Ministers of Jesus Christ. Yet there are others, who (though they make long Prayers) will not put up a Petition for the King. And some that pray for the *King*, will not pray for the *Queen*, nor the *Duke of York*, though I know no reason they have for it (since it is a thing required) unless it be that supposing they are Papists, take them to be their Enemies, and think it Duty in the general to pray against them as belonging to Antichrist.

As for my part, I think it is a great Duty to pray for the Papists, and the worst of Enemies; yea, and to love them also, taking all opportunities of doing them good. And though we  
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are to pray that Antichrist, that Man of Sin may be revealed; yet may we not pray against any particular persons, that God would cut them off, and destroy them; but that God would turn their hearts, and save them; especially any that are our Superiours, whom we are particularly bound to pray for, in our addresses to God Almighty.

Wherefore if any Dissenters suppose the Duke of York to be a Papist, (which is but a groundless supposition) yet they ought to pray for him, and (if their Enemy) to love him, if they make the Scripture the rule of their Obedience. But alas! this is not all, for they omit what Jesus Christ himself commanded them to do. Christ saith in *Luke* 11. 2. when ye pray, say, *Our Father, &c.* [say] what must we say? We must say these very words, *Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name, &c.*

The Presbyterians generally hold it lawful to say it in the publick as well as in private, and many of them do so.

The Independants think it not lawful either way, because it is a form of Prayer, and if used, would justifie the use of all forms, plainly opposing the very words and meaning of our Lord himself, who is the King of Saints, and Lord of all such as do Honour and Obey him, whose example we are oblig'd to follow.

I have heard all the Objections that can be urg'd against, saying, the *Lords Prayer*, which are vain and frivolous, considering it is a positive Command, and a plain Declaration of the Blessed Will of our dear Lord Jesus.

Though

Though much might be said in this matter, I will add no more, but only desire my Brethren to consider that these things are Scriptural; and that Dissenters acting contrary thereunto, act against the Scriptures; and that their Teachers who applaud the Scriptures so much, dishonour the Scriptures, by acting so contrary to them, as I have now evinced.

2. Against the Church of *England*, whose Communion I have embraced, they have many things to object. In the general they say that I have forsaken the pure way of Christ's appointment, and have chosen to my self a way that is corrupt, and dissonant to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in particular, they would evince thus.

First, (say they) You have a *corrupt Discipline*.

Secondly, A *corrupt Ministry*.

Thirdly, A *Tyrannical Government*. And

Fourthly, A *Superstitious Worship*, under which four particulars may be comprehended, most of the Objections used against our Church.

First, As to her *Discipline*, which they say is corrupt.

First, Because she admits prophane people to the *Lords Table*, whereby they become guilty of the *Body and Blood* of our Lord Jesus Christ, which the Minister should prevent, by examining them of their fitness for these *Heavenly Mysteries*.

Before I answer this, and some other objections, it will be necessary to premise these two things.

First, That the Church must not be condemned for the default of some of her Members, or Officers, it was not lawful to separate from the *Jewish Religion*, though many of her Members;

and



and Officers did greatly transgress the Ordinances that God had given them ; but it was their Duty, only to endeavour to reform what was amiss. So, though there may be defaults in the Church of *England*, through the negligence of some of her Communion, (as there is none but have faults more or less) yet the Church allows not of it, neither can that give any just cause for separation, only it calls for amendment and Reformation.

Secondly, We must imitate the example of our dear Lord Jesus, how opposite soever it be to our practice, and apprehensions of things.

Though the *Jewish* Religion (when our Saviour came into the World) was become very corrupt and Superstitious, as well as their Clergy wicked ; yet he no where gives them the least encouragement to separate, though for greater purity ; but commands them to obey.

For though the Clergy were wicked, yet Christ would have the people obey them, and do as they were taught, for their Doctrine was good, but in no wise to follow their example, for that was evil. Now as for admitting prophane persons to the Lords Table, our Church doth not allow of it : Though I acknowledge there are frequently too many of such who do receive, yet that is not the Churches fault ; nor alwaies the Ministers who doth administer the Holy Sacrament.

The Church of *England* hath taken the greatest care imaginable to prevent it ; for she hath ordered that none shall receive the Holy Sacrament, till they have been catechised, and well instructed

structed in the Principles of Religion, and afterwards brought to the Bishop to be confirmed.

She hath provided good exhortations to be read always some convenient time before the Sacrament be administred, to stir up people to a frequent receiving of those Soul-refreshing comforts, which are to be had in a right participation of that Heavenly Ordinance, and with all doth shew the great danger of unworthy receiving, giving certain signs and characters, whereby persons may know when they are fit Guests for that Holy Table, with several other necessary things too tedious here to relate, as appears by the Book of Common Prayer. Therefore it is not the Churches fault that prophane persons come to the Lords Table: Neither is it always the Ministers fault, for when the Minister hath discharged his Duty in fore-warning them of the great danger of unworthy receiving, and discovered to them who only are meet-Guests for that Holy Table; If then they come to receive, can any Minister reject them, and warrant his so doing by the word of God? I deny it, except it be in case the Minister have knowledge that any person be a scandalous liver, then truly he is to forbear, till he have admonished the person of his sin and danger, and till the person have manifested his repentance, and resolution of amendment.

And in case a prophane person should venture to embrue his hands in the pretious Blood of Jesus Christ, and another discern the iame, (being offended at it) he is in the first place privately to admonish him of his sin; and (having waited some considerable time) if no amendment follow, he

he is to take to him two or three more, who are seriously to discover the Temptations of Satan, and to tell him the danger he is in by walking so unsuitably to his Profession, and if he still persist in his evil Courses, they are to bring it before the Church; the Ministers and Officers thereof, who are openly to reprove him for his Offences, and after that if he will not be reformed to deprive him of the Ordinance; till he doth manifest his unfeigned resolution of amendment of Life.

This is the method prescribed in the Church of *England*, and exactly followed by some, tho' I confess many are too remiss: yet that can administer no just cause for any to separate, it being more frequently the peoples fault than the Ministers.

For I believe there is none in the Church of *England* will administer the Holy Sacrament to any persons, but to such whom Charity obliges them to believe are sincere good Christians. Many scandalous persons do receive, that's confess, but if they are known to be such unto the Minister, it is upon their promising to reform, and amend; and who can reject persons in that case, that hath the least spark of Charity in his Breast?

I will appeal to the practice of Dissenters themselves in that case, for what Congregation is there in *London*, (though it pretend to the greatest purity) that will not bear with scandalous Members a long time, and admit them, (still in hopes they will amend) to receive the Holy Sacrament even while they are notorious Sinners, upon their promise of amendment: I have known it

it in many Congregations, and am therefore the bolder to speak.

But some do object further, and say, that none ought to be received into Fellowship and Communion, without some particular examination before hand of their fitness for the same.

I confess truly that *Turks, Jews, Infidels, &c.* that own not our Lord Jesus Christ; ought to be examined particularly concerning their Faith, and resolutions of obeying his Gospel, according to the primitive practice.

But for Christians, that have by Baptisme put on Christ, and make a profession of the glorious Truths of the Gospel; and desire to partake of that Ordinance, after they have heard of the great danger of doing it unworthily, it is not very material for them; However the Church of *England* hath found out such expedients, that whoever will but follow the Rules she hath prescribed, may prevent all scandal that can arise thereupon.

And furthermore it must be observed, that the Church of *England* is a National Church, taking it in the largest sence, it comprehends all sorts of Christians amongst us; But being divided by those manifold Schisms, that wicked and unreasonable men have made; Those that adhere to the antient and primitive worship of Christ, and the Rule of the Holy Scriptures are of the Church.

These the Dissenters have aspersed, and calumniated in the most egregious manner, for their dissenting can't be maintained any other way, and by pretending Scripture for it also, of which they greatly make their boast, having it much in  
their



their mouths, though it be diametrically opposite to their actions.

The Church of *England* being of so large an extent, and such multitudes of Sectaries, possess with most unreasonable prejudices against her, it becomes impossible for ministers in their respective cures, so to discharge their duties; as otherwise might be expected from them.

Wherefore it is not the Churches fault, nor altogether the Ministers fault that prophane persons come to the Lords Table: But chiefly the Peoples fault, in not admonishing one another, and giving notice of such defaults unto their Pastour: which fault of the People I impute to be the dismal effect of separation, which I am perswaded would cease upon their returning to the Church again, and being of *one heart and one mind* as the Scripture doth require.

2. In the Church of *England* (they say) there is not that Familiarity and Love, which ought to be between those that partake of the Lords Supper; nor that tender care and watchfulness of one another as is among the Dissenters; they do not edifie one another by conferring and praying together as they ought to do.

Here is a severe charge against our Church, and hence the poor ignorant people think, they have sufficient Reason to justify their separating, and stroke themselves with the conceit of that happiness they enjoy in being separate from the Church; as tho' they might not be suffered to perform those Christian Duties in the Church of *England*, or as though the Church did not allow thereof.

Alas! I am sorry to hear, and see the sad effects that

that this Temptation hath produced, it was one of the strongest bands that kept me so long, from the Church of *England*; till God was pleased to unloose it, and the way he did it was thus.

1. I saw that what neglects soever there were of that kind, they ought not to be imputed to the Church, which not only allows of; but requires those duties to be put in practice, and whatever else really tends to the promoting of Holiness.

2. Though I saw many in the Church of *England* were guilty in those respects, yet I saw others that were very diligent in the performance of them, and that in a more excellent way than is usual among Dissenters, amongst whom is the greatest Love and Familiarity, and the most tender care and real kindness that is possible, who edifie, and build up one another in their most Holy Faith, and to that end, take all opportunities of conferring together, and pray with and for one another, adding to their Prayers, their Benevolence to the poor, being encouraged thereunto by the Rulers of the Church; wherein persons that are Religious may have great advantages for Holiness, and be encouraged to the highest pitch that can possibly be attained in this world. Therefore what need have persons to run into paths that are forbidden? when they may accomplish their end (if it be to serve God in holiness, and righteousness before him all the days of their lives) in the way of the Church of *England*.

I can't see wherein the Discipline that Dissenters  
M have,

have, exceeds that of the *Church of England*, unless it be in confusion and disorder and unmannerliness, therein it may justly claim preheminance, for there every one hath liberty to act according to the dictates of an extravagant fancy, even in Prayer, and be the matter never so rude, indecent, censorious or blasphemous, yet they account it spiritual Prayer; but a great affront it is to the Spirit of God, all which is prevented in the *Church of England*, where there is good Discipline; as appears by the reverential deportment of her Members in all their approaches before the great and glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth, who as Creatures express their great sense and awe of the Divine Majesty of their Creator.

Thus I have endeavoured to take off the Scandals that are thrown upon our Church with respect to her *Discipline*, which is certainly the best, (every thing duly considered) in the whole World.

2. They say the *Ministry* of our Church is very corrupt.

1. As to their Orders.

2. With respect to their Conversations.

3. In their Principles.

First, Their Orders are not according to Holy Scriptures, (they are pleas'd to say) and therefore corrupt; adding that we read of no Superiority among the Clergy, that one should be greater or less than other, but that they should be all equal and alike; to this I'll give my sense as followeth.

First, I acknowledge that our Saviour did say unto his Apostles, (upon that unreasonable request,

quest of the Mother of *Zebedee's* Children, to have her two Sons sit, one on his right hand, and the other on his left in his Kingdom ; ) that *whoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant*. But he spoke not this with respect to the Clergy, that one should not be higher than another in the Church.

Amongst the *Jews* under the Law there were three degrees, the *High Priest*, the *Priests*, and the *Levites* : So under the Gospel, there are three degrees among the Clergy, the *Arch-Bishop*, the *Bishops*, and the *Presbyters*.

As *Baptisme*, and the *Lords Supper* come in the room of *Circumcision*, and the *Passover*, so these *Orders* among the Clergy under the Gospel, come in the room of those *Orders* among the *Jews* under the Law : The *Arch-Bishops* instead of the *High-Priests* ; the *Bishop* instead of the *Priests*, and the *Presbyters* instead of the *Levites*.

The Nature of their Offices likewise, are much one and the same, having a great similitude, and likeness to each other.

And that *Episcopacy* is of Divine Right, plainly appears in that *Timothy* was made *Bishop* of *Ephesus*, and *Titus*, *Bishop* of *Crete*, whom *Paul* the *Archbishop* had set in *Crete* for this purpose, that he should set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain *Elders*, (that is, *Presbyters*, or *Ministers*) in every City, as the *Arch-Bishop* had appointed him, *Tims. 1. 5.*

They who are not fully satisfied in this point, let them read some of the late works of *Dr. Stillingfleet*, where they may receive full satisfaction.



2. As to the corrupt conversations of the Clergy of the Church of *England*, I say, I am heartily grieved that any of them should dishonour their holy profession: I am sensible enough that many of them walk not according to the Doctrines they teach; But this is not very strange, neither can it administer just cause of Separation; for the *tares which the Devil soweth, will grow up together with the Wheat, till the Harvest.*

☞ Hypocrisie for advantage will intermeddle with things that are most Sacred; and when it is secure in the possession thereof, discovers it self. Hence it is, that many under specious pretences to sanctifie, get into Benefices, and when they think themselves secure, discover their Hypocrisie, by not walking suitably to their profession, and thereby bring a scandal upon all of the same profession, be they never so Holy and Good.

Blessed be God, we have still many Holy and good men among the Clergy of the Church of *England*, and we have many otherwise, the Lord in mercy (to them, and the Nation) change their hearts: The Church of *England* is not singular in this matter; for I know no Sects but what are infected more or less with this contagion; notwithstanding it is one of the chiefeft props to maintain Separation upon, namely to abound in morality and outward sanctity; wherefore the Hypocrisie of some Dissenting Ministers, is not easily discerned by every vulgar eye.

But to speak a little more plain, I say, it is the great interest of these usurping Ministers by fair speeches, and a pretty tolerable shew of Holiness, to gull and deceive silly people, who like a  
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company of sheep are led by them whither they please, which otherwise could not be; for if their Hypocrisie were discovered in lewdness, as it is in spiritual wickednesses, the people they know would never follow them, which makes e'm carry their matters so fair and even to them, so close and private to themselves, that they would not for all the world be discovered to their people, it being as much as all their profit and income is worth; yet now and then they will be meddling, notwithstanding these inducements to the contrary, and are sometimes discovered, for all they are as it were transformed into *Angels of light*.

And now pray tell me which is the most corrupt Ministry, that of the Church of *England*, or of Dissenters; those whose Hypocrisie is known, and may therefore be avoided; or those that carry it so secret, as not easily to be discerned; I think that these last are the worst to be trusted. And thus you have my apprehension of this Objection against Church Ministers. But

3. They say, many of our *Ministers* are corrupt in their *Principles*, many are tainted with *Arminianisme*, as well as others have a good will to Popery, to all which I'll answer in a few words.

It is granted by most, that the generality of Church Ministers are sound in their principles, with respect both to the *Arminians* and *Papists*; and if here and there one be a little tainted (which is fore against the will of the Church) is it good to separate? and possibly fall into the hands of those whose business it is to defend those very errors; many of which, (and teachers of

far worse errors) are among the Dissenters; This is just as the Proverb goes, *ex malo in pejus*, out of the Frying-pan into the Fire; plunge themselves into a far worse condition than before.

Whence it will appear, that persons in the Church of *England*, are far more safe and secure from falling into Error, and damnable Heresies, than elsewhere.

And as for those who say that even our Universities are tainted with *Arminianisme*, they are only such who understand not wherein *Arminianisme* doth consist, and are encouraged to buzze it abroad, to frighten such who listen to their stories from her Communion, and to prevent others from cleaving thereunto, by bringing an evil report upon the good way of the Church, and the Ministers thereof.

But in all this (the Lord make e'm sensible of it) there is a great Mistry of Iniquity: Thus I have according to my ability, stopped two of the main springs, from whence so many objections flow against our Church.

A Third is this; Your Church (they say) is fraught with excessive Tyranny.

First, You usurp Christ's Regal Power, and Authority in his Church.

Secondly, You are of a most wicked persecuting Spirit.

The people being verily perswaded of the truth of whatever these men charge upon the Church of *England*, think they have sufficient reason to separate, and make conscience of so doing, because the Scriptures speak so much against Persecutors, and in favour of them that are persecuted, and looking upon themselves as such,

who

who *suffer for Righteousness sake* do hug themselves in the contemplation of that happiness, which God hath promised to those who *suffer for well doing*.

But alas! They sport themselves with their own deceivings, and distinguish not between *severe Christian Discipline which God hath commanded*, and *persecution which he hath forbidden*, as will appear, by considering the particulars of the charge.

First, They charge us with usurping Christ's Regal Power and Authority in his Church, which consists in giving Laws unto his Saints, and distributing rewards and punishments to them, as is their Obedience, or Disobedience to the same; and as if Christ had given us an imperfect Rule to walk by; you correct Christ's Wisdom (say the Dissenters) by setting up your Laws by his Holy Institutions, your Posts by his Posts; and in case your Laws be not observed, you are far more severe than if we broke all Christ's Commandements. This is the full force and strength of this Argument against our Church; which I apprehend may be answered very easily thus.

Jesus Christ our Lord is the King, and only Lawgiver of his Church who hath declared to us the whole Counsel of God, and hath omitted nothing that is necessary to our Salvation, which he hath not revealed to us. At the Saints are his Subjects, and are obliged as they love him, to keep all his Commandements.

Christ hath set Officers in his Church to instruct the people what his Will and Pleasure is, and to appoint such ways and methods to them, that may tend to the more effectual putting his



Laws in practice, whom he hath commanded the people to obey.

Now they, who do no otherwise than what Jesus Christ himself hath appointed; wherein do they usurp his Kingly Power, and Authority.

All those things required in the Church of *England* by the Governours thereof, in order to Conformity, are only a few necessary things, that are expedient both for *decency, and good order*; which to reject, is to despise Christ's regal Power and Authority, who commands them to render Obedience in that case, and is far more exceedingly a contempt of Christ's Regal Power, and Authority, then the other can be imagined to be an Usurpation thereof. Therefore,

Secondly, This is no Tyranny (nor effect of a persecuting Spirit) to inflict punishments upon those that break Christ's Laws, neither can Dissenters justly say they are persecuted, though they make a great deal of noise about it: They are only punished for their Offences, and suffer not as Saints for the cause of God, and the sake of Christ, but as Sinners for their Disobedience to the Gospel of Christ.

Disobedience to Christian Governours, God hath declared to be as great a sin as any in the Gospel; they are *Powers ordained of God*; if thou do well, thou shalt have praise of the same, but if thou do evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the Sword in vain, but he is the Minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.

The Scripture doth not call this a persecuting, but Justice executed by the Magistrate upon evil doers; or it is like to Parents correcting undutiful Children for their faults.

But

But still the Sectaries would have this to be *persecution*, because they suffer for *Conscience sake*, and for serving God according to his word (as they term it) neither of which can be made to appear with any tolerable shew of reason.

For if I suffer for Conscience sake, then I know that the *thing* I am required to do, God hath forbidden, or the *thing* I am required not to do, God hath commanded; either of these is sinful, and it is far better to suffer than to sin, to obey God rather than man.

But this is not the case of Dissenters, the Magistrate commands them to conform to a few necessary things, which God hath no where forbidden in his Word; and if they suffer upon that account, it is for Disobedience, and not for Conscience sake.

Again the Magistrate forbids them to separate and follow pernicious Teachers, which tends greatly to seduce them from their Obedience to God, and Loyalty to the King, which God also forbids them; and if they suffer upon that account, it cannot be for serving God according to his Word, nor for Conscience sake; and consequently it can be no persecution they undergo.

For it is the expresse Word of God, *Exra 7. 26. Whosoever will not obey the Word of thy God, and the Word of the King, let Judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto Death, or unto Banishment, or unto Confiscation of Goods, or to Imprisonment.*

And though Dissenters pretend to suffer for Preaching and Praying, and performing other acts of Religion which God hath commanded; yet it is nothing so, for all these Duties they may

may perform, in the way which God hath appointed even in the *Church of England*, and have praise of the same.

Whereby it plainly appears that they only suffer for their disobedience to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that the King, the Bishops, and others in Authority are the *Ministers of God for good unto them*.

And though now they cry out of Persecution, and Tyranny, they forget themselves that it is the same measure wherewith they did mete to others when they were in Authority.

Nay the Church of *England* knows not how to be so barbarous and cruel as those were, who under the pretence of Religion, cut off the Head of a most Pious and Excellent King and justified that their most horrid Villany, to be an excellent and glorious work, and good Service to God; who turn'd out the Church Ministers, though many of them very holy, and good Men, and had some of them a great charge of Children too; not suffering them so much as to keep School to maintain their Families, and to get bread for their Children, yea, they themselves judged Toleration to be a very unreasonable thing, and in no wise to be allowed of, and were more severe against those that did separate, than the Episcopal now are

The Church of *England* is so far from Tyranny that she hath been a most indulgent Mother, correcting and punishing her disobedient Children the Dissenters, far less than they have deserved.

Therefore the imputation of Tyranny to the Govern-

Government of the *Church of England*, is a very false and malicious thing; but there is more still behind.

4. The *Church of England* (they say) hath not only a corrupt Discipline, a corrupt Ministry, and a Tyrannical Government, but a *Superstitious Worship*. And here they triumph abundantly, making the People believe, that the Church is so corrupt through Superstition; that the very thoughts of holding Communion with her, are abominable to them.

And here I will labour to undeceive my Brethren, who are ready and willing to cleave to the Truth of the Gospel wherever it be found. The things which they affirm are wholly untrue, as will appear by examining the matter.

In the general they charge us with *Superstition in the worship of God, or the making those parts of Christ's Religion which he himself hath not made so; or otherwise to make that necessary to Salvation which is not commanded in holy Scriptures.*

This is one great branch of *Superstition* which the Dissenters charge upon our Church, but fail in the proof thereof; as will appear in its proper place.

Another branch of *Superstition* is this; to teach men to believe [that] *to be sinful, which is not forbidden in the Scriptures*; and thereby stagger the faith of weak Christians, filling them with groundless fears and jealousies, [least] they should offend God by such and such things; which they can't prove to be any way sinful by the Word of God.

Yet this by the vile insinuations of wicked men becomes the occasion of unspeakable mischief;  
which



which is the other branch of *Superstition*, whereof dissenting Ministers are guilty in a very high degree, who teach the same.

But it is the former they charge upon our Church, namely, the imposing upon them many things that are not commanded in the Holy Scriptures.

As First, *Set Forms of Prayer.*

Secondly, *The Cross in Baptisme.*

Thirdly, *Kneeling at the Lords Supper.*

Fourthly, *The use of the Surplice.*

Fifthly, *Bowing at the name of Jesus, and towards the East.*

Sixthly, *The Religious observation of Holy days*; with several other things, too many to be enumerated, but these are the chief, upon which account they charge us with *Superstition*, or an unaccountable adding to the *Worship of God*.

They can't prove that any of these things are forbidden either directly or by consequence, and so unlawful.

But being added (say they) to the *Worship of God*, and made parts of Religion, and so necessary to Salvation as to become the terms of Christian communion; they become *Superstitious* and sinful, and not to be complied with.

This is the very utmost that the wisest and craftiest of them all can produce in favour of their dissenting, and appears to be but a very sorry defence, if we consider that all these things, (tho' some of them do accompany the *Worship of God*, yet they) are *no parts of Worship*, nor are so esteemed in the *Church of England*; but certain *Adjuncts*, and *necessary Appendices*, which are in the power of our *Superiours*

perious to appoint; to which Injunctions, the people are bound to render Obedience, and they are not *necessary to Salvation, nor obligatory upon the conscience, when distinct from their command*; and may be altered as those in authority see meet, for the better promoting of Godliness.

That indifferent things, (which tend not only to edification, but also to decency and order) may be appointed to be observed in the worship of God, is evident from these Scriptures, 1 Cor. 14. 26, 40. *Let all things be done to edifying. Let all things be done decently and in order.*

And as if some things of this nature were still wanting, the same Apostle in that Epistle to the Corinthians, Chap. 11. last verse, saith, *the rest I will set in order when I come.*

And in the Church of Crete there were several things wanting, which Titus was to appoint, and set in order, Tit. 1. 5.

Yet there was nothing necessary to Salvation that Christ had not himself ordained and appointed for them before.

Whence it is clear, *that some few necessary things that are decent, and tend to Edification and good order, may be appointed to be observed in the Church of God.*

Before they were appointed, it was no sin, nor duty to observe them; but being appointed, and to refuse to render Obedience thereunto, is to sin against all these places of Scripture, Heb. 13. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves.* 1 Pet. 2. 13. *Submit your selves to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake.* Rom. 13. 12. *Let every Soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God, the powers that be*  
are

are ordained of God, whoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. And in verse 5. the Apostle tells them they must for this reason needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake.

And as if people were apt to slight this Doctrine St. Paul commands Titus to put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey Magistrates, &c.

All those things which our Superiors have appointed us to observe in the Church of England, are both *lawful* and *necessary*; They are lawful in that the Scripture doth leave some things, to humane Prudence to determine, and hath excepted against none of these in our Church, which have those qualifications that are required in the Scriptures.

There are many indifferent things that are simply neither good nor evil, that have an edifying property in them to stir up the dull mind to the remembrance of Duty; which notwithstanding our Superiours may not appoint in the Service of God: because they want other qualifications which the word doth require, as for Instance,

Eating and Drinking, slaying of Oxen and killing of Sheep, Carding and Spinning, Dancing, &c.

All these, (and many more which the Author of the Harmony mentioneth) are lawful things, and have their signification, but may not be brought into the Service of God, because they are not decent, which is a great qualification that the Scriptures do require to make them meet for such

such a use. But to examine the particulars a little will be necessary, to silence all objections.

First, *Set Forms of Prayer.*

There are many objections made against the *Forms of prayer used in the Church of England*; viz. *The Common-prayer*, and other *Forms of Prayer* used by many Ministers before, and after Sermon, together with the *Forms* prescribed, and recommended to the use of Christians in private.

First, *The Common-Prayer*, or *Divine Service*; upon which they have put the most odious Epithets that can be invented, and have used their utmost skill to turn it all into ridicule; Sacrilegiously prophaning the pure Word of God or that which is most agreeable thereunto. Some to represent it *Popish*, and Antichristian call it the *Mass*, others to represent it nauseous and contemptible, call it *Porridge*; all of them in so doing abundantly gratifie both the Pope and the Devil.

Alas! this is not to serve God, but to provoke him to anger, for it discovers most dreadful deceit in the heart, *speaking evil of things they understand not*, or if they understand, *like to brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves, discovering their own filthiness, and uncleanness*, 2 Pet. 2. 12. Jude 8, 10.

It is true there are many excellent things, in the *Book of Common-Prayer*, that are also in the *Mass-Book*; as the *Three Creeds*, the *Gloria Patri*, with divers prayers for sundry occasions; all which are very sound, useful and necessary; and it discovers a most malicious unchristian Spirit to call it the *Mass*, only because there are some things in it, which are in the *Mass Book*.

It



It is as much as to call a man a *Turk* because he believes something to be good contained in the *Alcoran*; or to say all such are *Jews* that believe the Books of the *Old Testament* are the Word of God: Good Christians may stedfastly own, and believe these things, without being either *Turks* or *Jews*: so there may be many good things in the Common-Prayer-Book which are also in the *Mafs*; and yet as great difference between them, as is between *Judaisme*, and *Christianity*, or *light* and *darkness*.

The *Book of Common-Prayer*, is as excellent a Book as ever was composed by the Wit of Man; most agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and most exactly corresponding to the practice of the Primitive Saints next unto Christs time.

And there is none can speak against it, but must greatly wrong God, and their own Souls, by speaking against that which is so agreeable to his Will, and substantially grounded upon his holy Word, that hath purged out of it whatever is untrue, whatever is uncertain or unnecessary; and yet many vile, filthy, uncharitable wretches will call it the worst of names, as an undigested Mess of Hodg-podg, Porridge, and what not.

Oh! the height of spiritual wickedness some are arrived unto, exalting themselves in their own imaginations, above the rest of their Brethren: But God hath threatned to pull down the Pride of such, and hath in all Ages, given us many Examples of his dreadful vengeance upon all such ever since the time of *Lucifer* of old.

This should teach us to be very humble, to be afraid to speak evil of those things we thoroughly understand not, and to be afraid of corrupting our  
selves

*selves like Natural Brute Beasts* (as the Apostles phrase it) in those things which we know not to say and censure as others do, but to put on Charity, (the most excellent Ornament of a Christian,) *which envieth not, vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, nor beaveth it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

If this Cardinal Grace were in every ones possession, there would be no occasion, either of Division, or Separation; but where it is wanting, there is *strife, envy, and malice, with every evil work.*

O! That my Brethren, the Dissenters would but seriously weigh and consider these things as I have done, and earnestly implore the God of Heaven to guide them into the way of all Truth; then I am perswaded they would take the same measures as I have done, and look upon Separation in its own proper colours.

As to the *Book of Common Prayer*, I will say no more but only this, that for all common and ordinary cases, there is none like it; for all extraordinary occasions, Ministers and People are left to their own discretion, either to pray *ex tempore*, or to digest their matter into some form.

And though the *Canon* directs them how to pray, yet it doth not absolutely confine them to any thing, as common practice and experience tell us.

Wherefore, such as say the Ministers are confined to a form only, speak contrary to the truth, and dayly experience.

And

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And tho' forms of Prayer are made for the use of weak Christians in private, yet it hinders none who have the gift from a due improvement of the same.

Though most of the *Presbyterians* have very little to say against these things, or against Lay Communion with the Church of England. Yet the *Independants* have irreconcilable prejudices against all forms; and the reasons they have for it, are principally these two.

First, Forms of Prayer (they say) tend only to maintain, and nourish laziness in the Clergy and Laity in that great and essential Duty of Religion.

Secondly, Forms of Prayer are a *stumbling* of the Holy Spirit.

To the first I answer, That Forms of Prayer do not always nourish laziness, and indifferency in that great Duty of Prayer, but the contrary; for gracious Souls that are sincere, and conscientiously seek unto God, it tends to quicken them up to greater diligence.

For they considering before hand what they have to say, and what words are best to be used; do with all Humility express them before God, in an acceptable manner; whereas many that are not gifted, having their words to coyn, know not what to say, and to fill up their time with speaking, some are guilty of abundance of tautology, and vain babbling, others of speaking nonsense, and some of most dreadful Blasphemy; which is too often the effect of *extempore* Prayer among the weaker sort, and might be prevented by using a form, that's suitable to their condition, where-

wherein they might pray fervently and effectually, without any danger of offending God by undue, or irreverent expressions.

Which, recommends the great usefulness and necessity of Forms of Prayer to be used by weak Christians; for requiring them to make their solemn address to God by *set forms of Prayer*, is to expose them to great danger, and as it were, to put edge tools into the hands of unskilful persons to their own hurt.

There are also many good Christians, and great professors in the School of Christ, that have but slender gifts, for whom forms of Prayer are very necessary on all publick accounts, and better to be used than the other; to prevent all those evil concomitants that usually attend those kind of Prayer performed by persons of but ordinary abilities.

And besides *set forms of Prayer* comes to one, and the same thing with a *form* in the use, with respect to those that are present at Prayer, for they are all up to the very expressions of the Orator, whereby it becomes a *form* to them.

And moreover it is not so good as a form, because he that prays sincerely, his heart must ascend up to God along with his Petitions, which cannot be without the assistance of the Holy Spirit; and as he must pray with the Spirit, so he must pray with the understanding also.

Now in a *form of Prayer*, a Person may consider every Petition beforehand, what is requested of God therein, and what is wrapt up in all the mysterious words that compose the same, and then may perform his Duty with great freedom of Spirit, and vigour of mind, by the assistance



of the Holy Ghost; to all which Petitions that he has before approved of, he may freely, and without any contradiction of Spirit, say *Amen*.

But it is not so in *extempore Prayer*, for first, persons must so hearken to the words of the Orator, as to judge whether they are proper.

Secondly, Whether the Petitions are good. And

Thirdly, Whether they are such as he can accord to, and in his heart say, *Amen*.

All these things must be, if we pray with *understanding*, as we are required in the Scripture, and all these things being unfit to be performed in a Duty renders a premeditated form the more excellent.

But if any reply, and say that these things may easily be performed in Holy Duties; I answer in the negative for these reasons.

First, In *extempore* and free Prayer, many uncouth expressions are oftentimes uttered, which are not understood by the Hearers, nor sometimes by the Orator himself, which makes them they cannot pray with the understanding: And if they pray not with the understanding, I am sure they can't pray with the Spirit.

Secondly, In *extempore* Prayer, illiterate persons speaking their words improper, or being straitened forwards, speak what comes uppermost, and so fail of sense, and of expressing what is chiefly upon their Spirits, which they might prevent by taking time to compose the same into a form, which would be more edifying to the Hearers, and more abundantly according to the mind of the Spirit.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, There are others may express words easie to be understood, proper, and good sense, and yet the matter of the Petition may be such, to which all that are present, dare not say,

*Amen.*

Many of which sort I have heard in my time, and they do greatly distract one in Holy Duties; all which is prevented by using of forms; which I judge to be most requisite for all publick occasions except it be for those that have singular parts, and that are very Orthodox in their judgment, otherwise unspeakable evils attend that kind of praying in Meeting-Houses, and Families.

And I may further add, that laziness, and great indifferency, in that great Duty of Religion will not admit many to use premeditated forms. For either they think they must use *em*, and never consider what is in them at all, or else reject them as useless, and unnecessary.

It is Satans policy to drive persons into one extreme or other.

And had not a *form* been *lawful*, and necessary upon such considerations as these; our Blessed Saviour, doubtless would never have prescribed us a *form*, and commanded us to the frequent rehearsal thereof.

He that hath any occasion to pray upon a publick account, either in the Church, or in his Family, ought to be diligent as well to prepare good matter, as to pray in a right manner; for it is the matter that is edifying to others, but the manner of performance that is pleasing to God, and profitable to a mans self.

SUCH a one may ought to digest his matter into some form, and so that it be sound and agreeable to the Word of God, and that it be pertinent, and suitable to the present occasion.

Now all this can't be done without great pains, and industry, whereas to run, and speak a few words that come uppermost, is easily performed without any trouble.

Therefore let forms of Prayer conscientiously used, do not nourish laziness, and indolence in that great Duty of Religion, but the contrary, which discovers the falseness, and vanity of this Objection.

2. Another great Objection is concerning our putting bounds and limits to the duty of prayer, confining it to a form of words.

This they illustrate by the similitude of a man who had but one Bed for all sorts of Travellers; if they were shorter than the Bed, it was his custom to stretch them out to the full length thereof, but if they were longer than the Bed, his custom was to pare off, or cut so much of them as did exceed the same.

The man is every one that useth a form of Prayer. The Bed is the form which he useth. The Traveller is the Spirit of God, which is not always poured out in the same measure.

Therefore (they say) if our Prayers are more, or longer than the Spirit will admit us in; that is, a stretching the Spirit to our Prayers. But if the Spirit be abundant in us, and our form of Prayer be too short or narrow to contain it, that is a paring it off, or confining it within such bounds and limits.

To this I answer, The Objection is either true or false, if it be true, then our Lord Jesus Christ hath confined the Spirit himself, in that form of Prayer which he hath taught us: *When ye pray, say our Father, &c.*

I can't believe that the Spirit is stinted in this, or in any other form of Prayer; for he that duly understands what is contained in the Petitions of the Prayers he useth, and sincerely, and earnestly begs those things at the hands of God; prays by the Spirit, and prays with the understanding also, according as God requires.

And if the Spirit convinceth any man of his danger, and of his wants; that man will be diligent to find out suitable words, to express the same to God Almighty.

Secondly, If forms of Prayer be a stinting of the Holy Spirit; then why are we commanded in the Scriptures, to make forms of Prayers, Supplications, Intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men, for Kings, and for all in Authority over us? Moreover,

Thirdly, The Saints of old have used forms of Prayer, and are no where laid to have stinted the Spirit of God.

Job he did choose out his words to reason with God, Job 9. 14. and made a Prayer, Chap. 10. see likewise Job 13. 18. and 23. 4.

David, he made many forms of Prayer and Praises, which he hath left upon record in the Book of Psalms to be used as such, Psalm 92. 102, &c.



And so have many other Saints mentioned in the Old and New Testament.

All this proves that *forms of Prayer* are lawful and necessary to be used on all ordinary, and publick accounts; and if so, it can be no stinting the Spirit of God.

Since our Saviour prescribes us a form, and commands us to say it; and St. *Paul* commands us to make Prayers for all occasions; since the Saints in all ages have used set forms of Prayer, and the Scripture doth no where call it a stinting the Spirit, neither was it ever so esteemed, till of late years. It is therefore a very weak and unjust Objection.

But others add, That by making of *forms* to pray by, we pretend to know that which the Scriptures say we cannot know; for *we know not* (saith the Apostle) *what we should pray for as we ought*; and yet by making of forms, we contradict the Scriptures, and in effect say, we know what we should pray for as we ought, without the Assistance of the Spirit.

Alas! This is a very idle Objection, and they that urge it, greatly betray their folly and ignorance: yet I have met with some that have very confidently opposed all reason to defend this point; but let such answer me these two questions.

First, Is it the Spirit of God only that doth furnish people with matter in *extempore* Prayer, or not?

The Objection affirms, that the Spirit helps with matter, though it is well known that the Spirit of God is a Spirit of great Wisdom and Understanding; a Spirit of Truth and Love; and

and they that make it the sole Author of Spiritual and free Prayer, deny this Truth practically, and make it the Spirit of Nonsense, of Error, and great Uncharitableness; yea, and sometimes the Spirit of Blasphemy; because many *extempore* Prayers admit of such enormous defects, which must by no means be fathered upon the Spirit of God, which will certainly come to pass, if the Spirit of God helps our infirmities with respect to matter in Spiritual, and Free Prayer.

Secondly, If all Spiritual and Free Prayer be not the immediate dictates of the Holy Ghost, which to assert, were Blasphemy, then I demand why a *form of Prayer* may not as lawfully be used as the other: From what hath been said, it appears to be not only lawful, but far more necessary and expedient for all weak Christians to use a form of Prayer, especially on all publick Accounts, as in their Families, &c.

For if the Spirit of God helps our Infirmities, not so much with respect to our matter, as to the right manner of performance; it will thence plainly appear, that a premeditated form is the best; and that the Objector is a kind of Heretick, by defending a point that hath such Blasphemy in it, as to make the Spirit of God the Author of all that wickedness which is too often committed in *extempore*, and Free Prayer.

Premeditated Prayers may with far more reason be called Spiritual Prayers, because they are, (if recommended to publick use) agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the mind of the Spirit, which cannot be said by all such as are *extempore*.

180 All which doth not only iustifie, but discover  
the great wisdom of the Governours of the  
Church of England in appointing the forms of  
Prayer that are in use amongst us.

Hence it will appear further, that there is far  
better Discipline in the Church of England, than  
among the best of the Nonconformists; for they  
admit not their Members to create confusion in  
the Church, by their own affected, and wicked  
Inventions; which defect of Discipline among  
Dissenters hath been the bane of this Nation,  
and a heavy Judgment of God upon us.

For they have separated themselves, and have  
forsaken the way of Truth, to follow their own  
Inventions, whereby they will bring upon them-  
selves (if they repent not) swift destruction, and  
the Scriptures must be fulfilled, which say, that  
many will follow their pernicious ways, whereby the  
way of truth shall be evil spoken of; and through Co-  
venant-faithfulness shall they with figned words make mer-  
chandise of you, whose Judgment shall be of a long time  
longer than they, and their damnation shall be more.

And St. Peter, describing who these are, in his  
First Epistle, saith, They are such as walk after the  
flesh, after the lusts of vile carnality.

Secondly, They are such as despise Government,  
they are presumptuous, self-willed, and are not afraid  
to speak evil of Dignities.

Thirdly, They are such, who like Natural  
Brute Beasts made to be taken, and destroyed, speak  
evil of the things that they understand not.

Fourthly, They are such who sport themselves  
with their own deceivings, who have eyes full of Spiri-  
tual Adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, be-  
trailing unstable souls; an heart they have exercised  
with

with excessive proflicke, curious Children, which have forsaken the right way, and have given astray following in the way of Balaam the Son of Bozor, who led and brought us of unrighteousness; humbled to shew

And Jude he describes them to be such as desire spise Dominion, and speak evil of Dignities; who speak evil of those things which they understand not, but what they know naturally as their Brethren in these things they corrupt themselves, who have gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the word of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain saying of Kora.

These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own Inventions, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, building them selves in admiration, because of advantage; whilst they who separate themselves, speak, having no other spirit. These have sayings not in the words of Holy Scripture, and fall upon such who separate themselves, thereby making the way of Truth, (the way of the Church of England) to be evil spoken of, who oppose Authority, and being a dissatisfied people, will walk after their own Lusts, and Inventions.

If the Dissenters will clear themselves from all these charges of Holy Scripture, they must alter their proceedings, for else they never can. God grant they may lay these things to heart, and seriously consider them, that they may learn to know how they may escape all the Wrath which God hath pronounced, and threatened to bring upon them.

As for my part I tremble to think what will be the end of these things.

And



And thus I have given my Judgment concerning the first thing Objected, as being a sinful imposition; namely the *forms of Prayer* used in the Church of England; and among the Members thereof.

Secondly, The *Cross in Baptisme* is another, and none of the least which they insist upon.

The chiefest thing objected against this is, That there is too much of the Nature of a Sacrament in it, viz. the sign, and the thing signified, which are the two essential parts of a Sacrament, and to add this to Baptisme, is to make it a Sacrament upon a Sacrament.

But this is only to cast a stumbling block in the way of weak Christians; for if it were true that every sign which hath its signification, did therefore become a sacrament, because it hath in it the Nature of a Sacrament; then I may safely say, there are many hundred Sacraments in the world, which for the same reason, would become unlawful to be used, and such arguing would be ridiculous, as for instance.

It would be unlawful to give Badges to Watermen, or Livery to Foot-men, because they are significant signs. The Badge is a sign that the Waterman serves such a person of Quality who hath bestowed the same upon him, and is useful to distinguish between the Servants of one Person of Quality, and another; and so is the Livery.

Again it would be unlawful to hang out a Bush at a Tavern because of its signification.

Also it would be unlawful to display colours of all sorts for the same reason; and it would be

unlawful for Tradesmen, by any sign to signifie their profession; in all which, and innumerable multitudes more, there is the sign, and the thing signified; and therefore the nature of a Sacrament, which they say makes it unlawful.

But it may be further objected that these are signs which have only a carnal, and worldly signification, and are not brought into the service of God, therefore no Sacraments.

To which I answer, There is nothing we can behold, but hath some spiritual signification in it, yet they are no Sacraments, and the using them in the service of God for a good end and purpose, doth not make them Sacraments, which is lawful to be done as I have proved, provided they have such qualifications as the Scripture doth require.

For be there never so much of the Nature of a Sacrament in any thing, yet it can be no Sacrament without the institution of Jesus Christ.

Therefore the Cross in Baptisme is no Sacrament, and the objection is made only to amuse silly people,

The Cross in Baptisme is an antient thing, and no relick of Popery; being long in use (before Popery was invented,) by such who (like St. Paul) gloried in nothing so much as in the Cross of Christ; which made them to cross themselves, and cross their Children, to shew their Enemies how much they loved the Cross of Christ.

And this shall suffice to shew the lawfulness of the Cross in Baptisme, which arguments do effectually induce me to comply with it.

The

The Third thing is, *knelling at the Lords Supper.*

The Presbyterians generally hold *knelling* to be lawful, but *sitting* more expeditious, as being more agreeable to the Nature of the Ordinance; and the Example of our Saviour, though in both I apprehend they are mistaken.

For the word which in English is Translated, and he sat down with the Twelve, both in the Original represent the use of the Country at their Suppers, which was a leaning posture.

Wherefore if Christ's example must be exactly followed, then the Nonconformists are wrong in their practice.

First, Of Sitting.

Secondly, In suffering more than Twelve to receive at a time.

Thirdly, Of admitting Women to the Sacrament.

Fourthly, Of suffering any to receive but Ministers.

And thus none of the Laity would receive any benefit from this dying institution of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And from thence I might further add, that the Sacrament might be administered to profligate and notorious Sinners; for Christ did give it to Judas, whom he knew to be so wicked, as to betray him, and of whom he said, one of you hath a Devil.

And as for *sitting* being most agreeable to the Nature of the Ordinance, I judge not for this reason, because of the unmannerliness of it.

For considering God to be a great and glorious Being, Infinitely Exalted above all his Creatures,

tures; and my self a vile unworthy Wretch, undeserving of the least of his favours.

Therefore in approaching before God in that great and solemn Ordinance to pray unto him, and receive from him the great and unspeakable Blessings of the Gospel; I am convinced I ought to do it in the most Reverend manner, humbly upon my knees, there to express my thankfulness for those great and wonderful Blessings I receive from him in that Ordinance, which is but reasonable.

And if we do so much, to Earthly Potentates, when we receive some signal favour from them; how much more will God expect it, (*who is the King of Kings, and the great Potentate of Heaven and Earth*) when he is giving to us his Son.

Mr. Cobb hath far exceeded any I know or ever heard of, in speaking against this gesture of kneeling. For,

First (saith he) It is made necessary to Salvation, in that it is made a term of Christian Communion, and so becomes superstitious.

Nay Secondly, He saith it is Image Worship, in kneeling down to Bread and Wine.

As to the first, Kneeling being proved lawful, and the most reverend gesture, was thought meet to be appointed in the Church, at the receiving of that Holy Sacrament.

And least any should fear, that adoration was meant thereby; the Church thought meet for the satisfaction of the scrupulous to insert this Declaration of her Judgment in the Book of *Common Prayer*,



**W**HEREAS it is ordained in this Office, for the Administration of the Lords Supper, that the Communicants should receive the same kneeling; (which order is well meant, for a signification of our humble and grateful Acknowledgement of the Benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers, and for the avoiding of such Profanation and disorder, in the Holy Communion, as might otherwise ensue) yet, least the same kneeling should by any Persons, either out of Ignorance and Infirmary, or out of Hatred and Obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved; it is here declared, that no Adoration thereby is intended or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine, there bodily received; or unto any Corporal Presence of Christ natural Flesh and Blood; for the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substance; and therefore may not be Adored (for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians) and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christs natural Body, to be at one time in more places than one.

Now how can there be any thing of Image-worship, since no Adoration is intended or done, either to the Elements or the Corporal Presence of Christs natural Flesh and Blood.

If it be said, to be a worshipping God before the Creatures of Bread and Wine, and in that sense Image-worship, as Mr. Lobb seems to intimate.

Then

But Then I say, such who Worship God sitting, standing, or any other way before such Creatures, and as Guilty of the sin, as those that do it kneeling; for it is still the same *act of Worship*, only expressed by *different gestures*.

Indeed something they would say to make the People believe that the Terms of Communion are sinful Terms; but nothing can they make out by Scripture or sound Reason.

For as kneeling is required in order to Communion, so it is proved to be lawful and good, and acknowledged to be so by many dissenters themselves; and is a term of Communion no otherwife than as sitting is among the Non-conformists. I am perswaded, there are many among them, who would not administer the Sacrament to any kneeling (though their Consciences would not suffer them to take it sitting) and there is great reason for it; because then they would make them guilty of that which they call sin; even to kneel at the Lords Supper.

Therefore we may as well say, Dissenters make sitting, a *term of Christian Communion*, and so are guilty of *Superstition*, as they say of us with respect to Kneeling.

But these are vain things; and not worthy to be regarded, save only that they are made use of to deceive the credulous and unwary.

The Lord grant that I may never sin worse, than by kneeling to receive the Holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and then I never need to fear, his displeasure against me.

The Fourth thing is the *Surplice*, which I am next to consider.

The *Surplice* is chiefly used for *Decency*; and *fine Linnen white and clean*, is called in the Scriptures, *the righteousness of the Saint*, Rev. 19. 8; and puts us in mind of the Sanctity and Holiness wherewith we should be arrayed, to make us amiable in the sight of God; which Garment having those qualifications that the Word of God doth require, viz. of *Lawfulness*, of *Edifying*, of *Decency*, &c. it ought to be used in the Service of God, being appointed by our Superiours.

Fifthly another great Objection, is *bowing at the Name of Jesus, and towards the East*.

This by some is accounted Idolatry in a very high degree; though all affirm that God ought to be worshipped according to his Word: yet some mistaking his Word, will not have us to bow down before him, nor give him any bodily worship, tho' the Scripture commands us *to glorifie or worship God, with our Body, and with our Spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *And thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Mat. 4. 10.

To worship God is an outward act of the Body, as well as an action of the Mind, to prostrate, and bow before him; which is most fully required in the second command, where it is said in the Negative, concerning Images, *thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them*; it is imply'd that we ought to bow down to God, and worship him.

It hath been the custom of the Saints of old to bow down their heads, and to bow their knees, as in Neh. 8. 6. *And all the people bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces*

to the ground. And Dan. 6. 10. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his House, and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did afore time. David he in a Heavenly Rapture, calls all the Saints to bow their bodies, and to kneel in Worshipping God. O come (saith he) let us worship, and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, Psal. 95. 6. *but yet he is not*

And this was St. Paul's practice, as he tells us in Eph. 3. 14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all the families in heaven and earth is named; whom God hath highly exalted and given a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, Phil.

2. 10. *now but yet he is not*

Which bowing may be taken in a literal, as well as metaphorical sense; for though the Angels have no knees, and consequently cannot bow them, (but being sublime Spirits, are greatly to Reverence his Holy Name) yet such as have knees, are most unworthy of Christ, if when they confess him to be their Lord and Saviour will not bow themselves before him.

If they only bow their Hearts and Minds to God, at mentioning the Name of Jesus; which they say they do; it is as much worshipping a Creature, (a name) as if they bowed their whole Body; for in the Scripture the Idolatry of the Heart is called *Spiritual Whoredom*.

But one of the two they will grant is expressly commanded in that Text; and being they grant one to be commanded, the other will naturally follow to be so, where God hath given it.



And concerning bowing towards the East, no man is required to do it, that thinks it is unlawful; and as for those that do it, we are to judge charitably of them; for God having commanded us to bow even our Bodies to him, why may we not bow towards the East? *the City of the living God?*

*I have sworn by my self, (saith God) the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return: (O what great and solemn thing is this which God is about to say!) and me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, Isa. 45. 23.*

And St. Paul puts the Romans in mind of this Precept, Rom. 14. 11. for it is written, *As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*

Thus 'tis plain that bowing and worshipping God with our Bodies, as well as hearts, is the express Will and Pleasure of the great God; and if the Saints of God, did use to worship him towards the East, and towards Jerusalem as is most certain; then why should any be so uncharitable in their censures, as to charge them with Idolatry.

However, to worship God with our Bodies by bowing, is certainly from all these places of Scripture a great Duty, and I doubt not but ought to be performed in the cases following.

1. When we do in a solemn manner go to make our Addresses to the great God. 'Tis well known that dissenters will bow their bodies to men, who are meer Creatures: how much more ought they to bow their bodies, when they present themselves before God, the Creator of all things, whom they are bound to worship, and none other.

2. We

2. We ought to bow when after Duty we go out of the presence of God.

3. When we enter into the place where he hath promised to be present in a more peculiar manner; even the Church, or place where he is to be worshipped.

4. We ought to bow when we confess, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and our only Saviour.

5. When we ascribe Honour and Glory to the Blessed Trinity.

In these Cases (at least) I think we can do no less, (if we obey the Word) than to bow *before the Lord God, our Maker.*

Sixthly, The last thing to be considered, (that is any thing material) is the *Religious Observation of holy dayes; dayes of praise, and thanksgiving;* which are kept in memory of our blessed Saviour, and his Holy Apostles; to celebrate the praises of God, for their blessed Examples and precious Doctrine; and to stir us up to follow their examples in true Holiness and Zeal for God, all the dayes of our lives.

These were the great ends for which these days were appointed; and also that we might have continual fuel to maintain the Fire of our Devotion unto God, and matter to stir us up to vigour and diligence in this service, and time, and leisure for the same.

Hereby we have every year the whole scene of Christs Life, represented to us, even from his Conception, to his Ascension into Glory: The consideration of each passage whereof (by the Spirits Assistance) hath a most powerful influence

to transform the Soul into the very Image of Christ.

Against these Holy Dayes, I did never hear a word of sound Reason, and yet the great usefulness of them doth not recommend them to the strict Observation of most amongst us.

Thus I have run over all the chiefest Objections that have been used against me for Conforming, and have given my apprehensions of the same; which contributes much to justifie my leaving Mr. Lobb, and his Congregation, to cleave to the Religion, that is establish'd by Law amongst us.

And now what remaineth, but earnestly to beseech the God of Heaven to *continue his favours to me, and to exalt his great, and glorious name, for all his unspeakable Blessings.*

*O Almighty, and everlasting God, the great Creator of Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all the Hosts of them; whose providence is over all thy Workes, insomuch that whatever befalls thy Creatures, is according to the Counsel of thy Heavenly Will, and the effect of thine Eternal Decree;*

*Out of a deep sence of thy Greatness and Holiness, I acknowledge my own vileness and unworthiness, of all the blessings thou heapest upon me.*

*O Lord, enable me, to walk worthy of thy Love, and not by ingratitude to forfeit thy Favours; but do thou continue thy Goodness, and Loving kindness to me, which is marvellous and astonishing.*

*Thou hast delivered me from every evil way, and by thy good Spirit hast led me into the way of Truth, according to thy promise.*

*When my soul was in adversity, and I knew not what to do, halting between two Opinions; then I*  
cried

cried unto thee, and thou hast delivered me, and set my feet upon a Rock.

O help me to persevere in the way of thy commandments, and abound in all the graces of thy Holy Spirit; that all the World may say, this is the Lords own doing, a great work, which he hath performed and doth own, and blest.

O My Soul, rejoyce in the Lord, and speak well of his name, make his praise glorious, praise him among the people; yea sing praises to him among the Nations.

O Lord, thou art my God, and I will praise thee, for all thy wonderful goodness to me; yea thou art my God, and I will exalt thy name through Jesus Christ for ever, even while I have a being.

Blessed be the Lord God of Hosts, from everlasting to everlasting, Amen, and Amen.



## A Prayer for Dissenters.

**O** Most Holy and Righteous Lord God, thou art Glorious in Holiness, Fearfull in Praises, doing Wonders; a God whose Compassions fail not, and whose Mercy endureth for ever; Do thou behold O Lord, visit with thy Salvation, and deliver all such as are sincere and upright, from all the devices of Sin and Satan.

We are perswaded thou hast many a Precious Saint among the Dissenters, who Conform not to the Lawful Commands of their Superiours, and that good Government which by thy Providence thou hast established amongst us; and is the effect of their Credulity and Ignorance, and a very great sin, as thou hast discovered in thy most Holy Word. The good Lord convince them of it, and give them Repentance and Forgiveness.

As for those among them who delight to bring an ill Report upon the Church of England (this English Sion) and so dishearten the People from her Communion; be graciously pleased (O Lord) to hold thy hand, and destroy them not together, as thou didst the Israelites in the Wilderness, but save them, and bring

bring them to Repentance, and a resolution of rendering to thee, Universal Obedience; and suffer them not to persist in their iniquity, till thy Justice do find them out.

There are some delight to continue, and increase our divisions; and craftily find out ways to stagger the Faith of weak Christians, to prevent their Conforming; But do thou, O Lord, turn the Counsels of those Achitophels into Foolishness, and let us all be truly sensible of the designs of Hell and Rome.

Their intent is to divide and separate us, as much as may be, that [so] they may destroy us; But do thou, O Lord, deliver us out of their hands, and let none of thy Saints be the Instruments in this Hellish Conspiracy.

To this end make all Dissenters sensible, how far they gratifie the Papists by their divisions, and render their wicked designs to be much more easily accomplished: Let them see thou abhorrest all such as put a helping hand to those Plots that are of the Jesuites contrivance, whether it be designedly, or through ignorance.

It is the great business of the Papists to create strife and enmity, between Friends and Brethren, and by putting on an extraordinary show of Sanctity, and transforming themselves into all shapes, do thereby deceive thy people, who are serviceable to them, at the same time, when they think they are a doing thee the greatest Service

vice

vice imaginable; But do thou undeceive them in this matter, and help them to put on Charity, and lay aside all prejudice, envying, Strife and division; for thou hast told us where these things are, there is confusion and every evil work.

They know if the Enemy should prevail, he will spare them no more than us; therefore let them not directly, nor indirectly, contribute any thing to facilitate the design of their, and our Enemies; which is to destroy us all together.

Neither let Jesuitical Counsel so far prevail with them, as to make them conclude, that there is no other way to compose our differences, then by changing of those lawful things, which have been so long observed among us, which if done, the Enemy will rejoyce, knowing that greater divisions will follow thereupon: But let every one of them diligently walk according to thy Word, in true Love and Obedience to thee, in all Fidelity, and Loyalty to the King, and in real Love and Charity to all men; that so thou mayst be glorified, our Enemies designs blasted; our Lives, our Laws and Religion preserved.

It is evident to them, as well as us, that Union alone will make us happy; O that thou wouldst put it into their hearts to do all things that are lawful to obtain Union; and make them sensible of the lawfulness of those things that are required.

Thou knowest (O Lord) that there is nothing required

required from them, but what tends to the decent worshipping of thee, and to excite our diligence in thy Service, and thou commandest them to obey, and be subject; grant O Lord they may do so, and discharge a good Conscience.

And do thou encline the hearts of our Governours, to favour them so far, as may consist with the Nations Peace and Welfare.

And let all those Fatherly chastisements inflicted upon them (for the breach of thy Laws) be for their good, and suffer them not, O Lord, to fall by their iniquities; but in much mercy discover to them their sin and error, and cause them to return.

O Lord bless them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, and bring them all into the way of Truth, even the way of thy Commandments, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all Honour and Glory, World without end, Amen.



*A short Appendix to the foregoing Discourse.*

Since I writ the precedent Part, many strange things have happened amongst us, of which it is necessary to make some brief Observation, to prevent some objections that may arise, and frustrate the good success, hoped for by publishing the same.

That Discourse hath been (as it were) finished, ever since *January 1681*: Since which great severities have been used against Dissenters; They have been much disturbed in their publick Assemblies, and not suffered to meet together as they used to do: Many have been excommunicated, Fined, and Imprisoned, and all in danger of Temporal Sufferings, upon which account many seem to have conformed to avoid the penalties of the Law.

2. There hath happened a damnable and wicked Plot, carried on by persons disaffected to the Government, for which several have received the just rewards of their most Hellish designs; which hath greatly animated such who halted between two Opinions, to greater love to the King, the Laws, and the Church, and to a greater dislike of all sorts of Dissenters, their ways and practices.

Neither of which had any influence upon me, in my adhering to the Church; for that was a time when all was serene and calm, they did then take liberty to preach, and print whatever they pleased.

In

In the year 1680, I had the strongest prejudices against the Church imaginable.

About the beginning of 1681, I began to be pricked with the sense of my sin in not conforming; and the 10th. of May was confirmed by the Bishop of London. The remaining part of that year, I was diligent to examine the matters in Debate in order to a full resolution, and before it expired, did thoroughly break off from holding communion in any of their Meetings or Assemblies.

In 1682, I met with great opposition from that Party; as I have in the Book fully discovered, which endued me to be curious in taking notice of every particular passage, setting down such things as I judged were material which in the end grew to a considerable Bulk, and when I had reduced them to some Method and Order, (which was effected that year) I was persuaded to commit them to the Judgment and approbation of the Learned and Godly in Ecclesiastical Authority; which was accordingly done in 1683, where it lay dormant a considerable Season, but at last awaked, and stepped out into the World as here you see, during which time most of these strange Revolutions have happened, to the Eternal Reproach and Shame of Dissenters.

I have great cause, and am under a perpetual Obligation, to bless God for such a seasonable deliverance, for had I continued any longer in my Foolishness and Obstinacy; God might have justly delivered me up to Satan and his Instruments, to be actuated by them in these late Hellish Machinations and Villainous Designs, under the pretence of opposing Popery, and serving God in a purer way.

By

By what I have done I enjoy Peace in my Conscience, which is more unto me than all Worldly Treasures and Riches, and having Food and Rayment, I desire therewith to be content, and patiently to undergo the displeasure of my Friends, who highly resent these my Transactions; trusting to the Providence of God which is able to raise new, to supply that defect.

In short, The whole work is the effect of that earnest Love, and Zeal, I have for the Church, and Government which God hath established in these Kingdoms, and hitherto preserved, notwithstanding the unwearied attempts of Papists and Dissenters to overturn the same.

And that this Church, and this Government may flourish, and for ever be preserved, and all her enemies designs blasted, and perpetually confounded: Let all Loyal Hearts, all good Christians, and sound Protestants with me, say, unfeignedly, *Amen, Amen, Amen.*

*O God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works, Psal.*

*71.17.*

**THE END.**

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